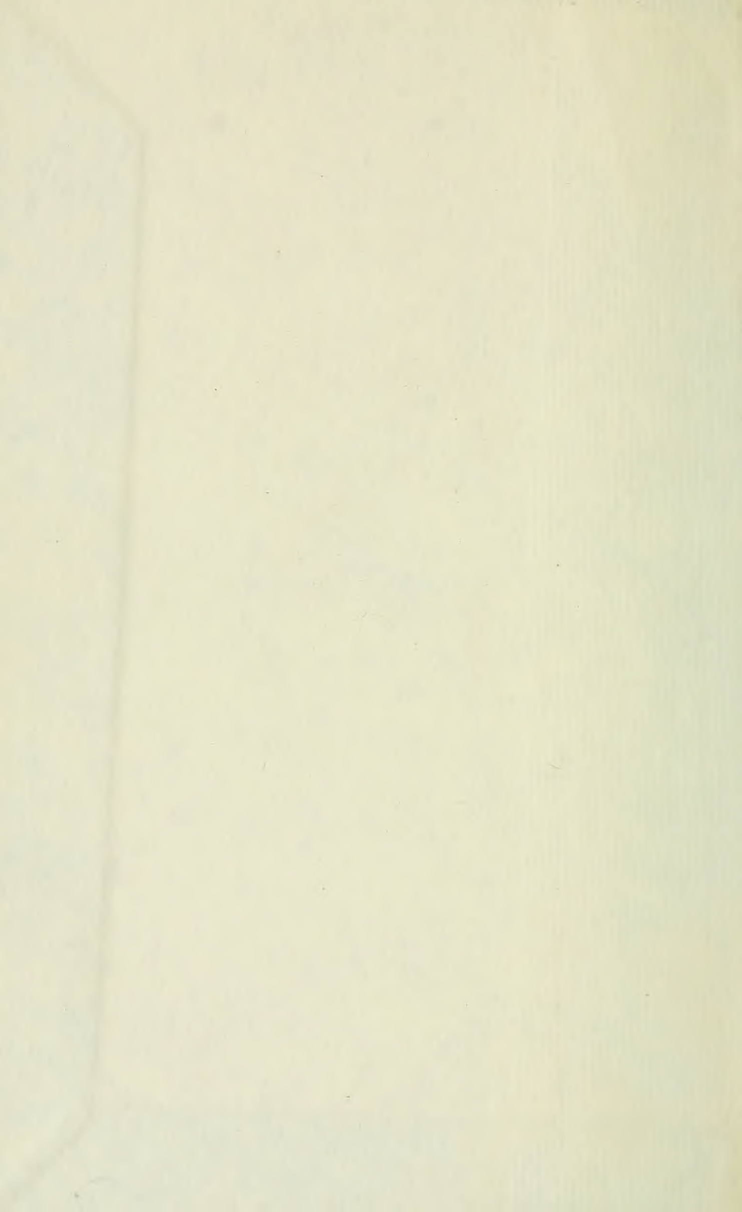
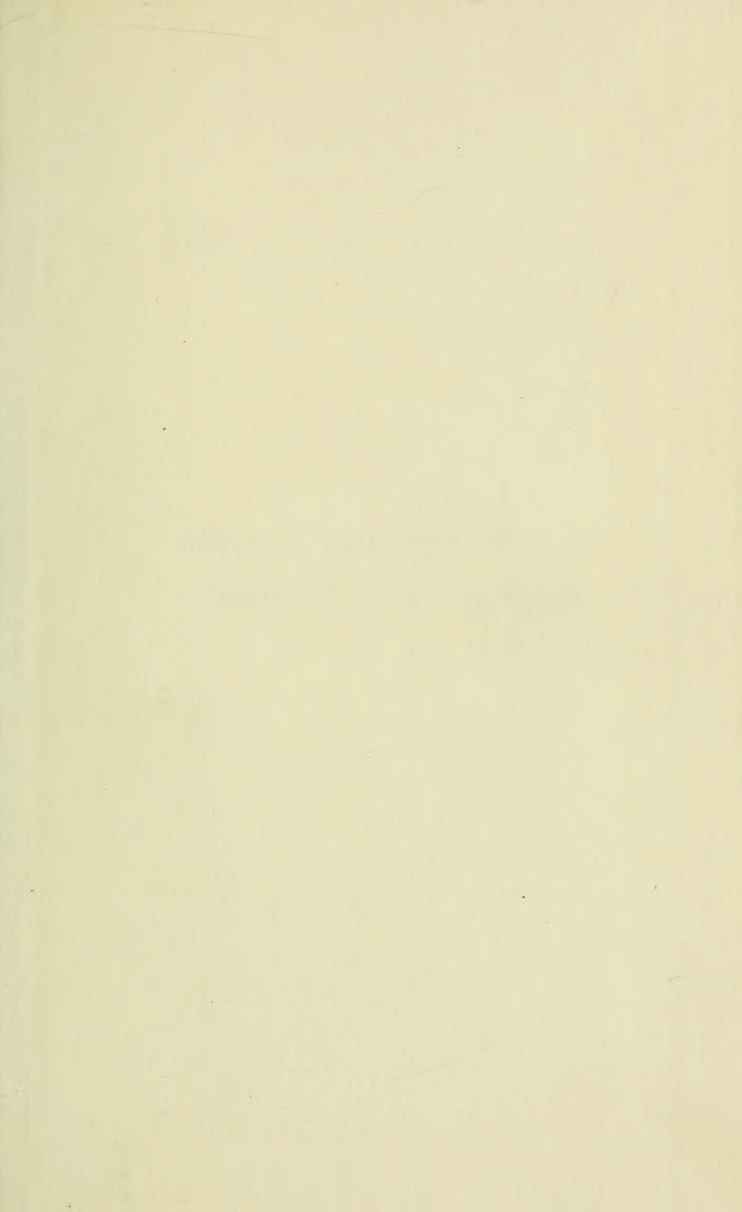

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AMONG THE DRUZES OF LEBANON AND BASHAN





THE CHIEF OF THE HAURAN DRUZES

[*Frontispiece*

AMONG THE DRUZES OF LEBANON AND BASHAN

BY

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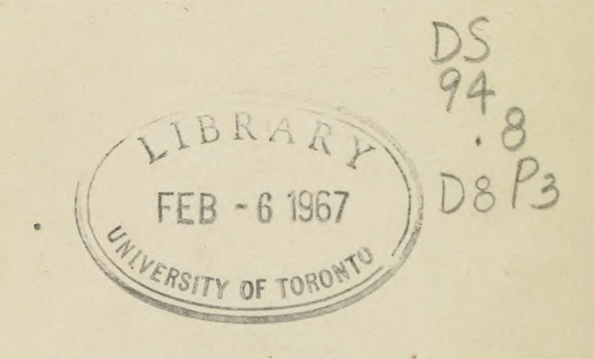
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1917

"Go up to Lebanon: and lift up thy voice in Bashan."
—JEREMIAH xxii. 23.

"Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field?"—ISAIAH xxix. 17.

"Son of man put forth a riddle and say, Thus saith the Lord God, a great eagle with great wings, long winged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar."—EZEKIEL xvii. 3.



PREFACE.

At the outbreak of war in 1914 the whole of my personal belongings, including a valuable library of 2000 books with a quantity of notes and photographs, were left at Beyrout in Syria. I have been compelled, therefore, to reproduce from memory and the imperfect records at my disposal the following account of our seven years' work amongst the Secret Sects of Syria. I am indebted to the J. and E.M., the S.P.G., the Baakleen Mission and the *Near East* for some of the information and illustrations contained therein, and in my effort to explain the nature of the Druze religion I have been greatly assisted by the invaluable writings of the Rev. Dr. Sell. The quotations from *Arabian Wisdom* by my esteemed friend the late Dr. Wortabet, of Beyrout, are sayings that were current in the Lebanon villages.

Christmas, 1917.

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CHAPTER I.

BRITAIN'S DEBT TO THE DRUZES.

On the sunny slopes of the beautiful Lebanon mountains, in the hill country to the north of Galilee, and in the ancient hills of Bashan, there lives a very interesting race of hardy mountaineers known as the Druzes. For nearly eighty years they have enjoyed the special protection and friendship of Great Britain, and for more than half a century they have accorded a hearty welcome to many British missionaries. It was in 1860 that the Lebanon was afflicted with an awful massacre of Maronite Roman Catholic Christians who were under the protection of the French Government. The massacre was instigated by the Turks, who roused the Mohammedans of Damascus, and succeeded in enlisting the

co-operation of some of the more fanatical elements amongst the Druzes.

The Maronites live chiefly in the northern portion of the Lebanon, and vastly outnumber the Druzes, with whom they were constantly at enmity, on account of political rivalries that have been fostered in these mountains for centuries past. French troops were landed in 1861 at Beyrout on the Syrian coast to punish the Druzes for participating in the massacre, and their extermination seemed imminent, when Great Britain once more interfered on their behalf and sent Lord Dufferin to see that justice was done to this little race of warriors, and that only those who were guilty should be punished for their crimes. The great majority of the Druzes had no wish to fall upon their Maronite neighbours, who were just as fanatical and as turbulent as the Druzes themselves, and who frequently provoked quarrels with their rivals.

Lord Dufferin succeeded in bringing about a peaceful settlement after the terrible slaughter and destruction that had ravaged the villages, and the European Powers compelled the Turks to grant autonomy to the Lebanon which was henceforth to be governed by a Christian Governor, appointed by the Sultan and approved by the Concert of Europe. The Druzes have always gratefully remembered the intervention of Great Britain, and have ever since been ready to serve the interests of our nation, relying upon us for the support and protection which they naturally supposed they might need.

A large section of this sturdy race lives in the mountains of the Hauran, south of Damascus, the ancient land of Bashan. There they enjoy much greater freedom and independence than their brethren of the Lebanon; but in 1909 the Turks decided to bring the Druzes into complete subjection to Ottoman authority.

They resisted, however, all attempts to deprive them of their rights and liberties, so a large Turkish army was gathered around their mountains under Sami Pasha, and for some months warfare was waged against the Druzes with very little success, on account of the guerilla warfare which these wild mountaineers of the Hauran were able to carry on against the Turkish armies. Sami Pasha, therefore, resorted to other methods. He sent messengers to the leading chiefs of the Hauran, who carried letters from the Turkish General with guarantees of security and safe conduct to the chiefs if they would come to the General's tent for the purpose of conferring about terms of peace. The Druze leaders were eventually persuaded to accept the General's invitation, and then, with characteristic treachery, Sami Pasha placed them all under arrest as soon as they arrived at the Turkish encampment. The eldest brother of the great ruling Atrash

family was executed in Damascus, and the second chief only saved his life by sending back messengers to his villages, and getting his aged mother to collect and bring £3500 in gold as a bribe to the Turkish General. This man, Yehia Atrash, was condemned to banishment and sent to the Island of Rhodes, where he was kept a prisoner under guard. The following year, however, the Italian war broke out with Turkey, and when the Italians captured Rhodes they released the Druze chief. He embarked on a British mail steamer, which touched at Beyrout and Jaffa on its way to Egypt. The Turks made strenuous efforts to recapture their prisoner; but the British captain defended him, and was able to produce official documents to show that Yehia Atrash was not a criminal as the Turks maintained, but only a political prisoner who could not be given up to the Turks whilst travelling upon a British steamer. Upon

arrival in Egypt the Turks made further efforts to imprison the Druze chief, but Lord Kitchener protected him; and after prolonged negotiations succeeded in compelling the Turks to allow this man to return to his people in the mountains of the Hauran.

It was there that I met him nearly four years afterwards in his wonderful mediæval castle. He took me aside into the women's quarters, away from his numerous retainers, in order that he might whisper into my ears that he owed everything to the justice and goodness of the British authorities; that he was ready to die for Lord Kitchener, and that there were 50,000 warriors in the Hauran and 15,000 in the Lebanon who were prepared to strike a blow for justice and freedom when the psychological moment arrived. Deeply in earnest, this great giant of Bashan, who stood nearly seven feet high, shook me by the shoulders and said: "Why don't you hurry up and estab-

lish in the Hauran the same kind of schools that you have already opened in the Lebanon amongst our people?" "You are making a great mistake," he said, "for whilst you are delaying, the Germans are forging ahead. We are all ready to welcome the people of Great Britain, but you will find nearly 500 German oil engines as you go around the villages. We used to deal with British merchants only; but their agents are far away, and my people do not know how to read or write. The Germans have sent engineers who continually visit our villages; and when anything went wrong with the English machinery, a German came to repair it; when he brought a new screw he must have broken a pivot, for very soon the British engines were all put out of action, and gradually these hundreds of German machines were introduced into our villages." "Here is money," he said, "for three schools, if only you will send us teachers at once to the

villages where our leading chiefs dwell, so that our children may be brought up in British schools."

The Lebanon has once again in 1916 and 1917 been devastated and ravaged by war, pestilence, and famine. Typhus and typhoid raged furiously in many of the cities of Syria, locusts destroyed the people's crops, and robbed them of the fruits and the olives which were their chief support. The Turks deprived the Lebanon of its independence and placed a cordon around it to starve out the inhabitants, but for the first time in history the Maronites and the Druzes, who have always been such bitter rivals, united in their efforts to preserve the liberties of the Lebonese. They refused, as well as they were able, to be enrolled in the Turkish armies ; and in hampering the Turkish operations throughout Syria and to the south of Damascus, they doubtless rendered a most valuable service to Great Britain and her Allies.

In the summer of 1916 the Turkish Government sent a Turkish battalion to the Nosairi Mountains, ostensibly for the purpose of tracking deserters, but really for taking over the new harvest. The brutal conduct of the troops provoked the Nosairi to open revolt, and a battle ensued which ended in the defeat of the Turkish force, whose losses amounted to about 200 killed and wounded, while the Nosairi's casualties were only twenty killed and fifty wounded. The remnant of the troops was then ordered back to Hama to await reinforcements, that they might return to the mountains with a mountain battery to inflict condign punishment on the rebels. This punitive expedition, however, had to be abandoned; for, meanwhile, news arrived that the Druzes of the Hauran had also refused to give up their crops to the Turkish force which had been sent for the purpose. As a result of this refusal, a battle, which lasted fifteen days,

took place between the five Turkish battalions and the Druzes. In this case, too, the Turks were defeated, thanks to the strong help received by the Druzes from the neighbouring Arab tribes. The Turkish losses were estimated at about 500 killed and wounded, while those of the Druzes and Arabs were about 300.

Smarting under their defeat in the Hauran, the Turks, to satisfy their desire for revenge, began to persecute some of the Druzes of the Lebanon, accusing them of complicity in the Hauran revolt. The emigration of some young Druzes to the Hauran in quest of food was taken as a pretext by the Government to increase the rigour of its revengeful acts. Some of the Druze chieftains were arrested, and two of their leading men were brought up for trial before the court-martial at Damascus, which condemned one to forced labour and the other to death by crucifixion.

When the time of deliverance comes to Syria, it will be our paramount duty to render substantial aid, at the earliest possible moment, to these faithful friends of Britain. We must endeavour to discharge our debt to the Druzes for the risks they have run and the sacrifices they have made on our behalf, and for their staunch adherence to the Allies' cause in our desperate time of need.

We therefore venture to publish a brief account of the Druzes and our work amongst them, in the hope that the people of the British Isles may take some interest in the needs and claims of these attractive races of Syria.

To recompense good for good is a duty.

Neglect of recompense is contemptible.

If a man do you a favour recompense him, and if you are unable to do so, pray for him.

The worst kind of recompense is to requite evil for good.

Reproach faults by kindness, and requite evil by good.

There is no glory in revenge.

—From " Arabian Wisdom," by Dr. Wortabet.



Specimens of giant cedars in the Lebanon

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Gate of Governor-General's palace at Bteddin

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CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE DRUZES.



CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE DRUZES.

To rightly understand the origin and development of the Druzes it is necessary to refer to the earliest days of Islam, when the followers of Mohammed were rent by a permanent schism into the two great sects of the Sunnis and Shiahs. Ali, the fourth Khalif, was the first cousin of Mohammed and the husband of his daughter Fâtima. On the death of Mohammed, one section of his followers claimed that Ali and his descendants could alone succeed by divine right to the leadership of the Faithful. They were overruled by the majority who elected Abu Bekr, then Omar and afterwards Othman, at whose death

Ali at last succeeded to the Khaliphate. After five years Ali was assassinated and his followers elected Ali's son, Hasan, who abdicated in favour of his father's rival Muawiyeh, Governor of Syria, on the understanding that at his death Hasan would succeed to the Khaliphate. The compact was, however, ignored by Yezid the son of Muawiyeh, for at his father's death, he usurped the Khaliphate and raised an army to fight against Hosein, who had been elected by the followers of Ali to the Khaliphate upon the sudden death of Hasan his elder brother. A terrible battle took place on the plains of Kerbela near ancient Babylon in Mesopotamia, where Hosein and his younger brother Abbas were killed. The followers of Ali have henceforth regarded their deaths as a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of all faithful believers.

Thus arose the great Moslem sect of the Shiahs who refuse to acknowledge the ortho-

dox Khalifs of Islam and recognise only Ali and eleven others as Mohammed's divinely appointed successors, whom they prefer to call Imams. Especial honour is accorded to the sixth Imam, Jaafar, who gave to the Shiahs their system of jurisprudence. The majority of the Shiahs trace the divine succession through Jaafar's second son Musa, but some of them disputed this succession, and trace the Imâmate through his older son Ismail.

These Ismailians, as they are called, were famous for their esoteric beliefs and for the remarkable efficiency of their Dais or missionaries. One extreme section of them became known as Bâtinis, so-called on account of the emphasis they laid upon a hidden or esoteric meaning in the Koran which, they said, could only be known to the initiated. The modern Ismailians of Syria follow the belief of these early Ismailians. The Druzes, who also trace

the Imâmate through Ismail, nevertheless follow more closely the teaching of the Bâtinis where it differed in some respects from that of the Ismailians.

In the year A.D. 893 a famous Bâtini missionary came to Barbary. He was a remarkable man, learned in all the mysticism of the Ismailians, a subtle and courageous propagandist. He became the leader of the Kitama tribe, and declared himself to be the forerunner of the Mahdi. He gradually conquered the whole of North Africa, and brought from Syria Ubaidullah, who was a descendant of Ali and Fâtima. He was declared to be the Mahdi, and became the first Fatimite Khalif of Africa. Cairo was founded by one of his successors in A.D. 969. The fifth Fatimite Khalif, El Azeez, was a wise and tolerant ruler. He married a Christian wife, whose two brothers were raised to the dignity of Patriarchs. He refused to punish any Moslem who cared to embrace

Christianity, and for fifteen years his Prime Minister was a converted Jew.

This strange and remarkable man's only son was the still more strange Hakim bi Amrillah who became the founder of the sect of the Druzes. He succeeded to the Khaliphate in A.D. 996, and his reign is one long record of outrageous cruelty. He began by persecuting the Sunnis, he then turned on the Christians, flogged their priests to death and destroyed their churches. The Jews were similarly treated, and those who were not slaughtered were compelled to wear black garments and bells round their necks, while the Christians wore a cross ten pounds in weight. Hakim destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, for years he stopped the Moslem pilgrimage to Mecca and set aside most of the chief obligations of Islam, so that he became as serious an enemy to the Mohammedan sects as he was to the Christians and the Jews.

Hakim came under the influence of two leading Dais or missionaries of the Bâtinis sect. One was Hamza, who is regarded by the Druzes as the real author of their religious beliefs, and the other was Derâzi, from whom the Druzes derive their name. They encouraged Hakim to proclaim his divinity in A.D. 1017, and the people of Cairo were prohibited under penalties of death from offering prayer in the mosques to any but Hakim. The Moslems resented this, and Hamza was compelled to resort to more secret methods for propagating the new doctrines, and he outwardly conformed to the practice of the old faith of Islam.

Missionaries or Dais were sent to all parts of the Moslem world, and Derâzi, the most successful of these apostles, went to Syria, where he became so elated with his success that he turned traitor to Hakim and began to preach in his own name. He was denounced

by Hamza, and was eventually murdered on the slopes of Mount Hermon. It is a curious fact, therefore, that the people are still called by the name of a man whom the founder of their sect repudiated.

In A.D. 1020 Hakim formed a plot to put his sister to death, but she forestalled him and succeeded in getting him assassinated. Hakim's body was never found, and so Hamza gave out that he was not really slain but had disappeared on account of the sins of the people.

A general massacre of his followers by the Orthodox Moslems began as soon as Hakim was slain, and many of them fled to Syria. In consequence of this outbreak of persecution, Hamza issued a proclamation to the effect that the day of grace was passed, the door was shut, and no more could be admitted to the faith of Hakim. They closed the door of admission to their sect from fear lest pre-

tended converts should betray them into the hands of their persecutors: for the same reason they introduced the custom, which still prevails, of holding all their meetings in secret. It was at this point that the Druzes ceased to be a *religious sect*, and the name henceforth is the designation of a *race* or *clan.*

In subsequent years, during the reign of the Khalif El Mustansir, there developed among the followers of Hakim a set of extremists known as Assassins, under the leadership of Hasan-ibn-Sabah. He fled from persecution from Egypt to Syria where he made many converts to Ismailian doctrines, and got possession of a fortress called Alamut, whence he began to raise himself to independent power by fair means or foul. In addition to his regular missionaries, the Dais, he instituted another order called the "Fidais" or the devoted ones.—These were the notorious Assassins of the Middle Ages. They were carefully

selected for their strength and courage, as well as their complete submission to the will of the Grand Master of the Order. They were taught that as the Prophet had slain Jews in Medina, so they could often serve God by slaying His enemies.

Hasan was called by his followers Sheikh 'l Jibâl (Chief of the Mountains), whence he is commonly known as "The Old Man of the Mountains". He died in A.D. 1110, but his family continued in power till A.D. 1256.

The Druzes, who were constantly at war with the Turkish authorities and their Moslem neighbours, eventually secured dominion over the greater part of Syria.

For more than 300 years they were the terror and lords of the country, always fighting either with their enemies or amongst themselves. Their internal dissensions and tribal jealousies enabled the Turks to drive them at last from northern Syria, and they

were compelled to take refuge on the southern slopes of the Lebanon. They drove out many of their kinsmen of the Ismailian sect, and held control of the Lebanon mountains from the Mediterranean coast to the ranges of the anti-Lebanon near Damascus.

There were two rival families, the Erslans and the Jumbalats, who nearly annihilated each other. They agreed at last to invite the Shehabs of Hasbeya to come and rule the Lebanon, as the Shehabs were related by marriage to the Druze Emirs.

Emir Beshir (1789-1840), who was the leading member of the Shehab family, established himself at a place called Deir-el-Kamar. He privately professed himself to be a convert to Christianity and in sympathy with the Maronite Church. He did this in order to secure the support of the great body of the Maronites who were living in the Lebanon. His rival, Sheikh Beshir of Mukhtara, was slain in an

attempt to foment a revolt for the overthrow of the Emir who had been supported by the Admiral of the British Fleet, Sir Sydney Smith, and was afterwards assisted from Egypt by the famous Ibrahim Pasha. In subsequent years the Druzes were armed by the Allies of Turkey for the purpose of overthrowing the authority of the Egyptians, but Emir Beshir refused to fight against his former friends, so that, with the recovery of Syria by the Turks, Emir Beshir was banished to Malta when he was 80 years of age. Anarchy now prevailed in the Lebanon. In 1841 the Druzes fought against the Maronites, and in 1843 the authority of the Lebanon was divided so that both the Maronites and the Druzes had a governor of their own. This fostered jealousy, and resulted in increased disturbances until in 1859 the Turks found an excuse for disarming the Maronites, and in 1860 a massacre of the Christians was planned

by the Turks. The rabble of Damascus and the worst elements amongst the Druzes were encouraged to participate, which compelled the European Powers to interfere, and put a stop to the awful massacre that took place in the memorable year 1860.

The Lebanon was now placed under the protection of the Great Powers, and a Christian Governor-General was appointed for the whole of the Lebanon with his headquarters at Bteddin, near Deir-el-Kamar, with four lieutenant-governors for certain sub-divisions of the Lebanon, one of whom was always a Druze with his headquarters, for the Druze districts, removed from the ancient capital of Deir-el-Kamar to the religious centre of the Druzes at Baakleen, situated about three miles from the chief governor's palace at Bteddin.

As a result of the troubles in 1860, large numbers of the Druzes migrated from the Lebanon and settled, with earlier emigrants,

in the inaccessible regions of the Hauran, the ancient land of Bashan. Here they were able to live the free and independent life which they so much love, but in 1909 the Turks attempted to bring them into line with Ottoman institutions, and just before the outbreak of the European war, they were rankling under even the limited amount of authority which the Turks had managed to impose upon them.

Man is like an ear of wheat shaken by the wind—sometimes up and sometimes down.

Man is a target to the accidents of time.

One day for us, and one day against us.

With to-day there is to-morrow.

To every Moses there is a Pharaoh.

There is no day which has not its opposite.

There is no joy which is not followed by sorrow.

Fortune gives lavishly, and then turns round and takes away.

When distress reaches its utmost, relief is close at hand.

Every ascent has a descent, and every trouble has an end.

To complain of one's grief, except to God, is an humiliation.

—From "Arabian Wisdom," by Dr. Wortabet.



View of the Ain Anub School and Village

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View of the Ain Anub School grounds from the playground

[*See page* 39



CHAPTER III.

A RUIN RESTORED.



CHAPTER III.

A RUIN RESTORED.

THE village of Ain Anub is an important Druze centre containing the headquarters of the powerful Emír Erslan. It is beautifully situated, nearly 2000 feet high, on the Lebanon hills, overlooking the city of Beyrout and the Mediterranean Sea. When I paid my first visit to the village in 1907, I took possession of two sets of buildings that were rapidly going to ruin. They had belonged to a brilliantly clever but eccentric lady, Mrs. Worsley, sister of the famous Bishop Gray of Cape Town, who obstinately dragged her devoted husband from their comfortable home in England in order to search amongst the Druzes for the descendants of the Hittites. She was a great student

of the prophetic Scriptures, a follower of the theories of Piazzi Smith with regard to the prophetic interpretation of the Great Pyramid, she wrote pamphlets in defence of the Anglo-Israelite theories, and was a remarkably clever artist. She purchased a considerable amount of property in Ain Anub, and erected a most substantial house for the private residence of herself and her husband, while at the other end of her property, near the village, she constructed a set of small buildings in which she accommodated a boarding school for baptised Druze girls. She worked very hard for the benefit of the villagers and was a liberal benefactress to large numbers of Druze widows and orphans. She was stone deaf and was never able to learn the Arabic language, so entrusted everything to the care of an English coachman, who, though undoubtedly a faithful servant at first, was unequal to the strain of so varied a set of responsibilities

and gradually succumbed to the evil influences of this Eastern village. Mrs. Worsley had brought from England in a huge pantechnicon the whole of her valuable, private furniture. A special jetty had to be erected at Beyrout for landing this extraordinary waggon, and for three days fourteen mules were employed to drag this heavy, cumbersome vehicle along the nine miles of winding roads that mount the Lebanon slopes, from Beyrout to Ain Anub. I found the ruins of the pantechnicon in the school grounds seventeen years after its arrival, and when the rubbish was sold by auction, this wonderful waggon fetched only 10s. 9d. The heavy Syrian rains had made havoc of the flat mud roofs which are characteristic of most of the Lebanon buildings. The water had percolated through these neglected roofs, and for seven years had been dripping winter by winter upon the European furniture, which, though once beautiful, was

now in a terrible state of dirt and disrepair. The rooms of the house had been locked up and sealed by Consular authority, as soon as Mrs. Worsley died. The carpets and curtains were all moth-eaten, the furniture was covered with dust, the place was swarming with rats and vermin, while snakes and jackals abounded in the twelve acres of rocky terraces that surrounded the house, and belonged to the estate. The paths and terraces were overgrown with long thistles and thorns, thickly inhabited by a gorgeous variety of lovely caterpillars and butterflies, of curious beetles and ants, of remarkable grasshoppers and marvellous specimens of the praying mantis. The fine trees had been stripped of their branches, for the villagers every year helped themselves to fuel which they purchased from the watchman. He was paid by the British Consulate to take charge of the premises, but he added to his income by renting certain portions of the

grounds to the village goat-herds, by selling some of the wood, and by occasionally accommodating a number of Druze families, who wanted rest and change on the cheap.

It was sad to see this once beautiful estate now so desolate, so neglected, and rapidly falling to ruin. Mrs. Worsley had foolishly left the whole of her property, worth about £20,000, to her coachman, who was to be the sole trustee of the institution. Her lawful heirs disputed the will, and litigation proceeded in the English Courts for a period of about seven years, before matters were finally settled. I interviewed the lawyers in England just before taking charge of the chaplaincy in the city of Beyrout, so that on my arrival in Syria, I secured official authority for assuming control of the property in Ain Anub. The coachman had already received a liberal present of nearly £2000 from Mrs. Worsley's estate, and the institution had been assigned

a capital sum of £8000 for its endowment, but when the lawyers' expenses had been paid, the endowment fund had dwindled down to £5300. This amount was eventually invested in the names of the Secretaries of the S.P.G., and provides an endowment of nearly £250 per annum for the educational work at Ain Anub. We had considerable trouble with the coachman who occupied a small house adjoining the school property. He had unfortunately given way to drink, he was heavily in debt, and was eventually committed to the Lebanon lunatic asylum at Asfuriyeh, near Beyrout.

In the autumn of 1907 I opened a small school and commenced to repair the neglected buildings. Various structural alterations were made in Mrs. Worsley's private house, which enabled us eventually to open it as a boarding school. The stables and coach-house were transformed into three classrooms, two large concrete cisterns were sunk in the hill-side

between these classrooms and the dwelling house, another large assembly room was erected over the cisterns, and the rocky refuse that was excavated for the construction of the cisterns was utilised for an extension of the playground. New lavatories were built, the drainage was improved, roads were made, the terraces were repaired, trees were planted, pumps were installed, and by the time the war broke out the half-ruined Worsley estate at Ain Anub was becoming one of the brightest spots in the Lebanon.

In 1914 there were over 150 pupils in the three departments of the institution at Ain Anub. The pupils paid more than £200 annually in fees. The boarding school became popular amongst the Druzes of the Lebanon, and all our best teachers for the village schools were trained at the institution in Ain Anub, which, with the endowment fund, had now become practically self-supporting.

A man obtains only what he strives for.

Struggles bring the most unlikely things within reach.

When a man makes up his mind to do a thing it becomes easy for him to do it.

You must be ready to confront difficulties if you would realise your hopes.

It is the part of man to strive, and not to rely on the favours of Fortune.

Not by fitful efforts, but by constancy, is an end secured.

A moderate success is better than overwhelming work.

The most wonderful thing in the world is the success of a fool and the failure of a wise man.

—*From "Arabian Wisdom," by Dr. Wortabet.*

Pupils of the Ain Anub School

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Squad of Scouts at Ain Anub. The first corps of boy scouts in the Turkish Empire

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CHAPTER IV.

EXPANSION OF THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION.



CHAPTER IV.

EXPANSION OF THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION.

It was in the spring of 1910 that the Rev. Canon S. Campbell paid a visit to Ain Anub as the Canon Missioner. We stood together on the flat, mud roof of the schoolhouse, admiring the beautiful scenery and the picturesque villages that nestled amongst the trees of this well-wooded portion of the Lebanon. I told him of the large number of Druze villages I had visited where there were no schools and no missionary work of any sort being done. "Here," I said, "was a unique opportunity for the Church of England to take up an important work amongst a people that would give us a hearty welcome. A hundred village schools would do wonders

for the Druzes, they would cost very little, for the people would certainly co-operate, and the opening of these schools would ensure a constant supply of pupils for the High School at Ain Anub. The benefits would therefore be twofold, the Ain Anub School would be able to prepare an adequate supply of teachers for the villages, and the village schools would prepare pupils for entrance to the High School." The Canon Missioner quickly grasped the situation, and promised to bring the matter before the Committee of the Hosanna League in London, which he had recently founded as a branch of the Jerusalem and the East Mission.

A few months afterwards there came one day to my office at Ain Anub, an intelligent young woman who presented an urgent request that we should hasten the opening of a school in the village of Beshimoon, about one and a half miles from Ain Anub. She looked

pale and worn, and her uncle, who was with her, explained that she was doing her best to teach the village children single-handed, that she had to manage from fifty to sixty high-spirited mountain lads, who crowded daily into her one little schoolroom. Her uncle was a Syrian Christian, who had lived in Jamaica for sixteen years, and had recently returned to his village on a visit to his relatives. He had been a schoolmaster before leaving Syria, had become a successful merchant in Jamaica, where he became naturalised as a British subject, and was a member of the Anglican Church. Since his return he had stirred up the people to take more interest in their children's education, and had persuaded his niece to open a school for the children of Beshimoon. The village was an interesting one, as it contained an equal number of Druzes and Eastern Orthodox Christians. Most of the Christians in the Lebanon are

Roman Catholic Maronites, who are somewhat fanatical, and did their utmost to prevent Maronite children from attending Protestant schools.

At Beshimoon, however, there were no Maronites, and the Greek Orthodox Christians were everywhere friendly to the English Church, chiefly because we were the only Foreign missionaries who sought their welfare without attempting to proselytise their people. A few of the Druzes of Beshimoon had lived for some years in Australia or New Zealand, which accounted for their readiness to co-operate in the opening of an English school.

The womenfolk of the Lebanon have a very vague idea of geography, and "America" is to them the name of every place outside Syria to which the Lebonese emigrate, though subsequent inquiry may reveal the fact that the husband or son is living in Senegal or Aus-

tralia. I had been told by the mothers of some Beshimoon pupils in the Ain Anub School that a number of Druzes had recently returned from America, and one day when on my way to the village, I met a stranger whom I was about to salute in Arabic. He managed to forestall me and to my astonishment shouted in English, "Good morning, sir, 'ow are yer gettin' on, an' 'ow's all at 'ome?" "Well," I exclaimed, "and where did you learn English?" He then informed me of his recent return, with other Druzes, from Australia, and of his anxiety to see the rising generation better educated.

On my first visit of inquiry I was warmly welcomed, and the villagers informed me that their school fund had a balance of £8 in hand, after paying the rent of the schoolroom and the teacher's salary; from which it was evident that the people had already made a praiseworthy effort to help themselves. Some of the smartest boys in our Ain Anub school

had come from this village, and I had told Canon Campbell that nothing could better ensure the success of the High School than the opening of a few village schools like the one at Beshimoon. When, therefore, the appeal from the village of Beshimoon came, I forwarded it at once to Canon Campbell, and the Hosanna League so quickly and heartily responded that we were able on December 27th, 1910, to take charge of the school at Beshimoon with both niece and uncle as teachers, and in less than a month we had enrolled nearly a hundred pupils.

The beginning of this village work was particularly encouraging. The chiefs and the villagers came and discussed with great enthusiasm all the necessary details connected with our arrangements for the half year and laid it on the table before me. It was amusing to see the array of greybeards sitting in the schoolhouse with all the dignity of a

London School Board, watching me examine the boys so as to rearrange the classes and to appoint the curriculum. They were highly delighted with the brief lecture which I gave the assembly on "School Sanitation" and charmed with the demands which I made upon the landlord for certain structural alterations that would give us proper ventilation. It was a new thought to them that a schoolmaster should have the slightest concern for the health or comfort of his pupils. All my suggestions were carried out with a promptitude that is unusual in Syria, where the rule is "always put off till to-morrow what you are not obliged to do to-day". The carpenter was speedily set to work on the new seats and window-frames, and we quickly perceived the tremendous advantage of having the Mission School run on the partnership principle. There was no waste of Mission funds, no complaints, no grumbling, for while their money was min-

gled with ours it was expended with the same rigid economy as if it were all their own.

The son of the great Druze sheikh of the village posed as the spokesman of his people, for he was a student at the American College in Beyrout, and on behalf of the villagers he presented me with the following address in English, which is interesting amongst other things for its ambitious phraseology :—

"As we all know that .knowledge and literature are the only ways by which men are promoted, then according to our present time, which is the time of literature, the best profession by which a man can do good for himself as well as for others, and by which he will be the man of the future, is to be a man of literature.

"Because our small village is very poor in sciences, contains many young men who are not polite, therefore because of your love you have made a good school for its young men in

order to lay a good foundation for their future when they are to be sent to higher schools or some colleges. We thank you for your look-out at our village, and saving many men from their great and powerful enemy of ignorance. I hope this school will grow on the right line and be accompanied by great advance and success. We thank also its teachers and the members of its little community for their good work and for their watching and urging the students of this school in order to be industrious and diligent, because on them the progress of their country depends.

"This is not a wonderful action from you because you are accustomed to do such good things as this, therefore we are not wonderful about that."

This was the first venture made by the Hosanna League for bringing succour to the Druze villages of the Lebanon, and it was remarkable how rapidly the work developed and

prospered. In less than five years we found ourselves with a flourishing High School at Ain Anub as the centre of an extensive educational work, and twenty-three village schools under our care with over a thousand pupils. The partnership system adopted at the outset worked remarkably well. Every village school contributed at least a half, and more often two-thirds, of the expense of its upkeep, and the High School at our headquarters in Ain Anub was rapidly becoming more and more efficient under the guidance of my most faithful colleague, the Rev. J. E. Cheese, who was ably assisted by two self-denying ladies, Mrs. and Miss Thompson.

HOTEL AT AIN-ZA-HALTA, NEAR THE CEDARS IN THE SOUTHERN LEBANON

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DEIR 'L KAMAR. THE LARGEST MARONITE TOWN IN THE DRUZE DISTRICT, NEAR BAAKLEEN AND BTEDDIN

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CHAPTER V.

"SCHOLARITIS."



CHAPTER V.

"SCHOLARITIS."

"Know, O young men, that ignorance is a shame; get knowledge, get knowledge."

BEISUR is one of the largest of the purely Druze villages in the Lebanon, situated at a height of 2200 feet upon the eastern slopes of the first high range, about twelve miles from Beyrout and three from our educational centre at Ain Anub. It faces the distant Baruk cedars and is hidden away from the well-frequented carriage roads, nestling around three beautiful springs in a verdant basin. Primitive but prosperous, its interests and customs are those of a mediæval village, yet its boundaries are within rifle range of the most modern hotels in the mountains. The

village doctor, who lives three miles away at Ain Anub, told me he seldom pays more than four visits a year to the robust inhabitants of this well-favoured village. They escaped the smallpox epidemic which ravaged the mountains in the year 1911, but another fever of Western origin, "Scholaritis" by name, suddenly invaded their cosy compound. This affection of the brain was apparently carried from Beyrout by some of the younger muleteers, who deciphered a cryptic warning in Arabic neatly written in hundreds of places by the Young Turks upon the street walls of the city, which, being interpreted, says, "Know, O young men, that ignorance is a shame; get knowledge, get knowledge".

The passion for learning broke out in Syria immediately after the Turkish revolution displaced the despotism of Abdul Hamid and substituted the semblance of constitutional government, but it took a long time to pene-

trate the remote villages of the Lebanon. I watched for two years the period of incubation, as the deputations which came to me from Beisur and other benighted villages grew more and more enthusiastic in their demands for a school. I waited till I was satisfied that my diagnosis was correct, that "scholaritis" was raging, that the village was ready for its physic, that the fees would be paid, and the conditions observed, then the school would be opened and success was assured.

By the generosity of Mr. and the Marchesa de Grave Sells of Genoa, we were able to make grants to Beisur for a girls' school as well as for the customary school for boys. The wife of the Druze Bey interested herself in the girls of the village, and seemed to be remarkably anxious that her own two very pretty daughters, as well as the village girls, should receive the same definitely Christian instruction which she herself had received at

the excellent boarding school of the British Syrian Mission at Shimlan. It was not possible, however, to teach in a village day school the many useful lessons she had learned at a higher grade boarding school, nor did we consider it advisable in the Druze villages to do more than insist upon a daily lesson from the Bible and the inculcation of Christian morals as the basis of our elementary education, but the enthusiasm of this influential lady for the Christian religion was a striking testimony to the influence of educational Missions and an illustration of the attitude of mind which we found existing amongst almost all the educated Druzes of both sexes. The teacher we engaged for the girls' school was also a very interesting character who spoke English well, and had likewise been educated at one of the British Syrian Mission boarding schools. She was a Druze who read her Bible daily, used "Daily Light," prayed regularly as a Christian,

taught her pupils Christian hymns, and though never baptised she was more diligent, more truthful, more unselfish and more truly Christian in character than many other workers we had who were born of Christian parents.

The first teacher of the Beisur boys' school was educated at Ain Anub. He was at his wits' end to know how to accommodate the large number of pupils that crowded to the school. I paid him a surprise visit one day in the height of the silk-worm season, which generally emptied a village school, but I found nearly one hundred youngsters all keenly intent on learning. I was obliged to limit the attendance to sixty pupils for every village school with only one teacher, for this often meant five classes and seven hours' hard work every day except Saturdays and Sundays. When I entered the schoolroom on my surprise visit, I found the "Squire," Abu Shakib Bey, one of the Druze aristocracy and a member of the

Governor's Council for the Lebanon, sitting at the teacher's desk reading St. Matthew's Gospel to one of the classes. I had introduced the New Testament which was almost unknown in this ultra-conservative Druze village, and the young "squire" who had a son in the school, was keenly interested to discover what the book was like. He expressed his astonishment at the cheapness of so neat a book and at the charm of its contents. He liked it so much that he had come to help the teacher with some of the reading lessons.

Preliminary compliments being ended he sent messengers through the village to fetch from their work or their fields the other four members of the School Committee. They quickly appeared, full of gushing enthusiasm for their newly-founded academy and overflowing with Eastern compliments, some of which struck me speechless with embarrassment.

We got to work, however, and examined the school, aided by the "squire," who took charge of the arithmetic but did not venture further than simple multiplication. The boys were beyond the standard of their years in Arabic reading, backward in writing and arithmetic, entirely ignorant of geography, and the older ones who hoped to pass on to the High School had made a good beginning with English. I promised to try and secure some maps and Scripture pictures for their bare walls on condition that they themselves made a little more school furniture. The teacher closed the school with the reverent recital of the Lord's Prayer by all the boys, after which we visited the girls' school and subsequently took our departure.

In the village of Beisur there lives the holiest hermit of the race. He is supposed to possess magical powers, and is one from whom a single word is enough to arouse the Druzes

to a man. This religious hermit and the worldly-minded "squire" were united, with all the rest of the holy and unholy villagers, in promoting the welfare of their very elementary institutions for modern culture and Western learning.

When leaving the village my smile of satisfaction over this successful surprise visit deepened into a broad grin as I reined up my horse by the side of a protruding rock that points towards a Maronite village on the opposite side of the valley. A well-known tradition declares that the village of Beisur once had a furious quarrel with the Maronites on the opposite hill. They mustered their forces at this rock for the purpose of cursing their unclean Christian neighbours. But the villagers belong mostly to the "Initiated" Druzes, and considered themselves too respectable to allow such terrible curses to pass from their lips as they considered the occasion re-

quired. They therefore hired an arrant reprobate from a neighbouring village to stand and curse, for all he was worth, those unholy Maronites in the name of the most holy men of Beisur.

My companion explained to me that it pleased the men of Beisur to know that the New Testament is a book which is forbidden by the Maronites in their schools, and that therefore they are determined to use it all the more!

A few months after the opening of our Beisur schools, I was astonished at the arrival of a large deputation from this very Maronite Christian village. They begged of me to come and open a school for them, as the Roman priests were doing nothing for their children who were growing up as heathen. The people had seen our school at the Druze village of Beisur, and they now declared that we were teaching the Druzes to be better Christians than they were themselves!

I had no intention of opening a school in this Maronite village, but I spoke so sympathetically and made so many inquiries that the priests were speedily informed of my supposed determination to open a school. The ruse was successful for the priests were alarmed, and a few weeks afterwards a teacher was sent by the Bishop, and a school was opened in the Maronite village which had been so savagely cursed by the men of Beisur. The incident recalled to me the story of a famous American missionary who was asked what errand he had in visiting a small village. "I am going to open two schools," he said, adding, with a twinkle of the eye, as he saw the anticipated look of surprise on the face of his questioner, "I shall open one to-day; the Jesuits will open the other to-morrow!"

CHAPTER VI.

DOGS OF WAR AND HERALDS OF PEACE.



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DOGS OF WAR AND HERALDS OF PEACE.

A Lebanon official was calling upon me one day in the autumn of 1913 when, in the course of conversation, he told me there had been a considerable amount of unrest in the Lebanon during the last six months. "For twenty years past," he said, "the shooting affrays in the villages have only averaged nine per annum, but during the last six months forty-nine persons have been shot down in the highways by brigands or fanatics, and most of the murdered happened to be Druzes, and the murderers were unfortunately Maronite Roman Catholic Christians.

A serious incident developed as a result of

one of these murders committed just outside the Druze village of Beisur, where we had two flourishing schools. Five hundred armed men suddenly appeared before an equal number of armed Christians from the village of Suk 'l Gharb. A young Druze had been shot by a Maronite Christian, and when the tidings reached his village the people were aroused to avenge the blood of their slain. There had been too many of these incidents of late, and now they were determined to put a stop to them. They had often appealed to the Lebanon Government officials, but nothing had been done, and they determined at last to take matters into their own hands. The officials became alarmed, for if actual fighting began, there might easily ensue a tumult throughout all the villages of the Lebanon, and a desperate civil war could easily be precipitated between these fanatical Maronites and the warlike Druzes of the South. The

authorities promised the Druzes that they would certainly deal with the murderers and bring them to justice, but the Druzes replied that they distrusted the promises of the officials and could wait no longer, as their patience was exhausted and they were determined to wreak vengeance upon the murderer of their villager. A huge tribal war seemed imminent, for the Druzes demanded the immediate arrest and production of the Maronite who was hiding in the Christian village of Suk 'l Gharb. The Christians were obdurate and disinclined to accede to their demands. At a critical hour there arrived upon the scene a young British Consul, and for a moment the tumult was silenced whilst explanations were given of what had been happening. The Consul parleyed with them, and eventually pledged his word to the Druzes that he himself would undertake to see that the murderer was produced and brought to

trial. The chiefs stepped forward, acknowledged their indebtedness to England, and declared that the Consul's promise sufficed for their purposes, as an Englishman's word could be trusted. The crowds were then dispersed, civil war was averted, and in accordance with the promise made to the Druzes, the murderer was subsequently captured and eventually condemned. This was a striking testimony to the nature of British influence amongst the Druzes of the Lebanon.

It was only a few days after, however, that another Druze was murdered belonging to the village of Benneh, where we also had a flourishing little school. This made things look serious, for troubles were brewing on every hand, but as we went about amongst the villages we were deeply gratified to find that one of the most potent factors that made for peace was the little British school which

had been opened in so many of these disturbed villages. The Druzes were accustomed to rely upon the British authorities to protect them, and at such a time of trouble and anxiety, the most visible proof to the ignorant villagers of Britain's concern for their welfare was the little English school in their midst, the hospital at their capital, and the constant visitations of our English workers when inspecting the village schools. The Druze did not always distinguish the totally different functions of Church and State, but when he looked upon the hospital or entered the schools he thought of the kindly care which the British people had for his welfare; when troubles arose, he was the more prepared to listen to the counsel of his true friends and was ready to sheath his sword at the advice of his British protectors. I visited the village of Beisur a week after the trouble that arose

over the murder of one of their people, and as I cantered through the streets, I was much astonished to observe the joyous excitement of the villagers. Hundreds rushed to their doors to shout me their salutations and to invite me in to a meal. The children ran ahead and yelled to each other, "Our priest, our priest". A dozen lads fought for possession of my horse when I alighted, the sheikhs and the great Bey or "Squire" of the district gathered to welcome me. After many salutations that were more pronouncedly friendly than usual, the conversation turned upon the recent troubles. They found vent to their pent-up feelings and confided in one of their friends. "Well," said the Bey, "we will hide nothing from you, we look upon you as our minister and we will make our confessions to you, just as the Maronites confess to their priests!" He then proceeded to tell me with much detail the story of their

troubles, and concluded with a fervent appeal that I should visit the village more frequently so that they might constantly confide in me, and that we might take counsel together in all that concerned the welfare of their people.

War is an evil thing to both victor and vanquished.

It is better to avoid than to make war.

To die in battle from a thousand cuts of the sword is easier than to die in bed.

A battle is fought by feints and stratagems.

What an easy thing is a battle to one who looks on at a distance!

Beware of aggression in war—for it can lead to no glory in victory.

To overcome the weak has all the shame of a defeat.

Magnanimity to captives, and mercy to the fallen, are a hymn of praise to God for victory.

—From "Arabian Wisdom," by Dr. Wortabet.

CHAPTER VII.

STORMS THAT SHAKE THE LEBANON.



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STORMS THAT SHAKE THE LEBANON.

THE Lebanon is a favourite health resort for the dwellers in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. During the summer months the villages are crowded with visitors. The large hotels in the more popular towns near the railroad to Damascus are generally thronged with Egyptians, while every available cottage is rented from the Lebonese by the inhabitants of the Syrian cities who take refuge from the heat of the plains in the salubrious villages that overlook the Mediterranean Sea. The summer, however, on these lovely little hills is a great contrast to the short-lived gloom of the winter, when the Lebanon sleeps her sleep and silently suffers the fury of the fierce storms

that rage round her snow-capped summit. The winter of 1911 was one of unprecedented severity. Snow and hail, falling for thirty-five days almost without a break, occasionally covered the hills down to the very verge of the plains. The railroad to Damascus was blocked for a month, and a thousand men were engaged for seven days in a fruitless attempt to find the mouth of a tunnel that was hidden by thirty feet of snow. The extraordinary severity of this winter was experienced throughout the whole of Syria and the greater part of Asia Minor. Numbers of people and thousands of sheep perished, while hundreds of thousands of olive trees were destroyed by the frost. Twenty-three mules walked into Aleppo one day laden with merchandise, but ownerless, for their owners had perished in the snow. A man on horseback arrived at a village, frozen to death, his two companions were found dead on the road. Seven camels

reached one of the Khans in Aintab without drivers. A relief party immediately started back and found them huddled together and frozen to death. A large caravan reached Kaisariyeh without drivers, the bell-animal having led the others safely to their destination. Ten days later the drivers arrived there, having saved their lives with difficulty by taking refuge one by one in different villages.

Wild animals were driven by hunger to seek food in the towns, and a wolf was shot in the market place of Aintab. The body of a man, badly torn by a wild animal, was found within a few minutes' walk of the American College, and two wolves attacked the College servants quite near the city.

There was a serious scarcity of food and fuel, building material such as beams and poles were sold for firewood, unfinished and unoccupied houses were stripped of their wood, and some of the people burnt their furniture, their

window-shutters and doors, while one family took the donkey into the house that they might be warmed by the heat of its body.

Beyrout was cut off from its supplies by land; and food, for a time, became exceedingly dear. Those of us who were spending that winter in the mountains were living in constant dread lest our sheltering roof should be torn away by the terrifying gales. At Ain Anub we were awakened one night by a rumbling overhead, and discovered next morning that thirty tiles had been carried away while we lay helpless in our beds. Many windows of the schoolhouse were shattered, and one day as we sat at lunch a whole window-frame was hurled to the ground by the side of our dining-table. Doors that would burst open had to be barricaded, and the flat mud roofs were so saturated with water that not a room remained free from leakages, and in some places our floors were covered with pools of ice-cold water.

This was a bitter winter for our children at the High School, and much more trying for the poorer children of the villages, many of whom came to the day schools very insufficiently clad, and we were grateful to our English friends who sent us gifts of clothing that enabled us to alleviate the sufferings of the poor.

My weekly journey on horseback between Beyrout and Ain Anub became proportionately difficult and trying. My horse would occasionally stagger the width of the road as he faced the blast, and once it seemed as though both horse and rider would be blown over the cliffs to the valley below. On another occasion as we rounded a corner, we were met by a pelting shower of small stones that were swept off the terraces above, and hurled into our faces with terrific force by the angry tempest. Alternately we were blinded by driving sleet, enveloped in a cloud of

falling snowflakes, forced to take shelter under the trees from a sudden deluge of enormous hailstones, wading through rushing torrents that cut up the mountain roads, or splashing through muddy pools in the valleys and the plains.

I remember on one occasion having arranged for a baptism to take place at Ain Anub on the Sunday evening. I was in Beyrout for the morning services and visited the ships in the port during the afternoon. One of the winter storms then suddenly began, but I mounted my horse, faced the elements, and arrived in time to greet the astonished villagers who had gathered from a distance and had given up hopes of my coming as they watched the fury of the storm. I felt miserably uncomfortable, but I was well repaid for my venture as I noticed what a deep impression my unexpected appearance had made upon the people. It

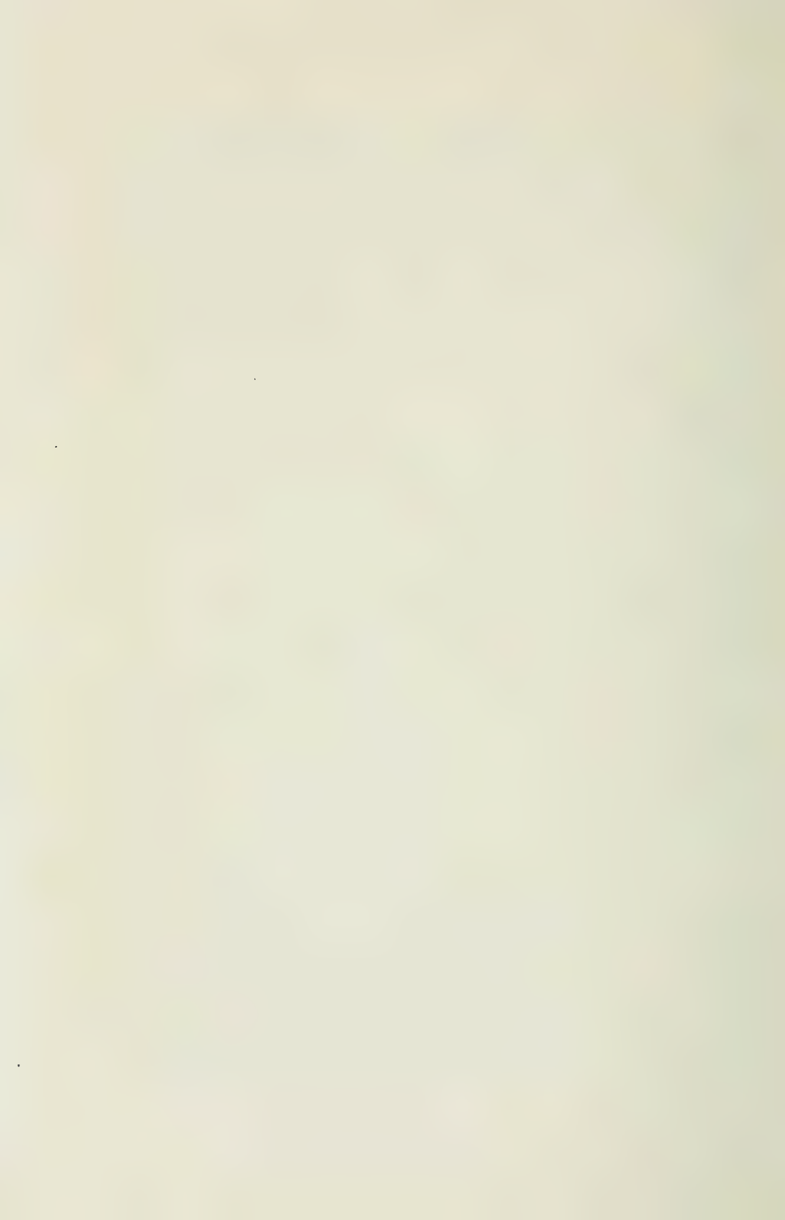
was talked about for a considerable time afterwards, and was cited to confirm the prevailing impression so prevalent in Syria that an Englishman's word is his bond.

On another occasion, a like adherence to duty provided me with an excellent illustration for driving home a salutary lesson to the young people of Beyrout. I was due to give an address one evening to a large gathering of school children, and determined to say something about the growing habit amongst Syrian women of imitating Western customs by resorting to powder and paint for their complexions. The difficulty was how to point the moral without giving offence. Early that morning I was also due in Ain Anub for an important engagement when a sudden storm began to rage furiously. I hesitated for a time but at length decided to go, and when I arrived at the schoolhouse, wet through to the skin, our workers there noticed my

remarkably fresh complexion and my brilliantly rosy cheeks. The journey through the storm, though trying, had nevertheless done me a world of good, and when I returned that evening to address the young people, I announced my intention to speak on a subject that would interest them, viz., "How I painted my face". The story of my morning's ride tickled their fancy, and the lesson was easily pressed home that healthy exercise, devotion to duty, and readiness to endure hardship, were far more conducive to a happy healthy life than the slavish imitation of the foibles of the West.

Scout Boys of the Ain Anub School saluting the Bishop of London at the school gates

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CHAPTER VIII.

CATERPILLARS AND CANKER-WORMS.



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CATERPILLARS AND CANKER-WORMS.

A REMARKABLE change takes place upon all the hills of the Lebanon in the spring of every year. In the early days of March the hills are gorgeously green, as the myriads of small mulberry trees that grow on the terraces are fully clothed with their bright green leaves. A few weeks afterwards, however, the aspect of the hills is changed, and the Lebanon is once more bronzed and brown, for the little silk-worm has eaten up every available leaf, and left the mulberry trees barren and shorn. It is just at this time, however, that the Lebanon rings with the joyous tinkling of bells, for the people have garlanded their mules and every transport animal is commandeered to hurry off to the

factories the precious burden of the silk cocoons. The silk industry is one of the most important in the Lebanon. The people habitually vacate their private rooms and fix up little shelves of bamboo canes upon which large flat trays of basket work are placed, and the women and children busy themselves night and day with the gathering of mulberry leaves which are carefully spread upon the trays for the feeding of the silk-worms. The little creatures need a considerable amount of care. The men superintend the operations, fix up the shelves, attend to the terraces, and bring in the thorn branches or the bundles of Genista upon which the worms in the course of time weave their golden cocoons. Sometimes the season is an unfortunate one, when the cold or the rains come at an unseasonable hour and cause many of the worms to perish. Generally speaking, however, the silk-worm season is a profitable time for the Lebonese. The little caterpillars

do their work well, and though they spoil the look of the Lebanon, yet they weave myriads of miles of silken thread for the ribbons and robes of gay ladies in the West. The large "factories" now dotted all over the Lebanon give forth an unsavoury odour when the silk is being wound off after the cocoon has been placed in boiling water, but the operation is an intensely interesting one, and every silken thread that comes to Europe is a combination of three or four finer threads that are unwound from as many cocoons and are bound together in the spinning mills.

The holidays for the village schools are arranged to coincide with the silk season. The schools are often closed for more than a month as all hands are needed to pick the leaves and to keep the voracious caterpillars adequately supplied with food. When the cocoons are gathered in, the mules laden and garlanded with many tinkling bells, then

the teachers call back the children to their lessons.

This little caterpillar, though he desolates the hill-side, is nevertheless a beneficent creature, but there are other really vicious worms that bring poverty to the people, that canker the fruit and spoil the vines. I remember one pestilent little fellow, beautifully clothed in ermine, who on more than one occasion made havoc of the olives and brought much distress to the people on account of its ravages when the buds were just appearing upon the olive trees. The Lebonese have not yet learned how to destroy these pests, and the Lebanon Government, under the Turkish regime, seldom attempted to come to their aid. Our village schools were the hope of the country, their uses were many and various, we were not only able to indicate to the rising generation the improvements which were possible in their agricultural system, the use of chemical

manures, the methods adopted in other lands for destroying objectionable insects, but these little schools constantly demonstrated their efficiency to destroy the numberless moral canker-worms that had too long spoiled the lives and blighted the souls of these sturdy mountaineers. They not only taught the lads to strive after knowledge, but to love the truth, to hate factions, to seek after peace. They trained them to observe the importance of the little things of life, they fitted them to develop their own moral and mental capacities as well as the resources of their country, and they never neglected to point them to the hopes and glories of a better life beyond.

I was very greatly encouraged by the way in which the intelligent lads of our boarding school voraciously devoured the important lessons that we sought to teach. The results of our High School work at Ain Anub became speedily apparent in the villages when we were able to

employ our own young graduates as teachers in the village schools. It was quite amusing to see the way in which these young men tried to imitate our methods at the High School, and by doing so greatly gratified the astonished villagers in the out-of-the-way corners of the Lebanon.

There was one young lad who stayed for five years with us at Ain Anub. He arrived with tears in his eyes, his relatives had mocked him and bitterly opposed his determination to come to school, but he persevered in his resolve, and earned for himself a sufficient amount of money to pay his fees for the first year. In subsequent years his parents consented to help him, and when at last he graduated they were tremendously proud of him. He was never a brilliant student, but he was always plodding and persevering, and he became devotedly fond of his school and his teachers. When at last he took his certificate, he contemplated leaving for

America, but I suddenly received a grant from the Hosanna League which enabled me to offer him a post in one of the remote villages of the Lebanon, not far from the famous Cedars. He went there and did brilliantly, his discipline was splendid, the pupils were keen and attentive, the villagers gave him the best house they had for the schoolhouse, they provided the pupils with useful desks, roughly made but just like those that were used at our High School, and when I appeared amongst them for the first examination, I was astonished to find that under the guidance of this young "Druze" teacher, the pupils passed the best Scripture examination of any village school I had inspected in the Lebanon.

We had a similar experience in another village school where the teacher was one of our High School graduates. Sixty-three pupils were under his care, and such was the reputation of the school that four pupils came every

day from a village three miles away. His organisation was magnificent, he made his senior scholars assist him with the junior classes, and many a trained board school teacher in England would have found it difficult to do so well with such a motley crowd of pupils as that young "Druze" in the Lebanon.

I remember riding away from that village with a very thankful heart, and as I crossed the dry river-bed at the foot of the hill, I reined up my horse in front of a large oleander bush. I was making a collection of Lebanon butterflies and moths, so I dismounted and searched diligently through the bush for "hidden treasure". Failing to find what I wanted I remounted and began to pass on, but I immediately espied on the opposite bank another large bush emblazoned with blossom. At first I decided not to dismount as my search in the other bush had proved so fruitless of results, so I passed on, but quickly repented and turned

back for another search at the second bush. This time I was amply rewarded, for hidden amongst the leaves I found a beautiful caterpillar of the oleander moth which I immediately consigned to a match-box to carry home in triumph. I continued my search and was again rewarded with a large specimen of one of the most beautiful moths in the world, just free from its chrysalis. I caught him gently between my thumb and finger so as not to spoil his glorious garments, and carried him home to a place of honour in my large collection. My children were delighted with the find, and the next day set out on a hunting expedition for oleander caterpillars and moths, with excellent results. The following Sunday at our children's Service I passed round the little creeping treasures which they had discovered, and was able to point some excellent morals to the children who were keenly interested in this *lively* children's Service.

There is plenty of hidden treasure amongst the sturdy mountaineers of the Lebanon villages, but patience and perseverance are naturally needed to bring it to light. We were sometimes disappointed in our work and tempted here and there to give up our efforts, but I think we always found that perseverance brought its due reward, and enabled us eventually to discover some excellent specimens of humanity in various stages of growth, which we tried to nurture until they developed into right-minded citizens, adorned with goodly virtues and godly fear.

The village school work was interesting for its wonderful variety. Some of the schools could be described as being still in the egg, when warm discussions would be carried on with the village chiefs and definite negotiations were being made for taking under our care one of their miserable native schools. Others that were just hatched required attention of a

different kind, the sorting of the lads into classes, providing them with books, collecting the fees and instructing them in the necessity for elementary cleanliness and discipline. Others underwent the chrysalis stage. Some had got their wings and fluttered before us as well-bred butterflies of which we were genuinely proud.

The village school at M. was a tiresome little grub. It was in one of the most awful villages in the Lebanon for squalor and ignorance, disease and dissensions. The school, however, made excellent progress, and we never had the slightest difficulty in finding all the money that was required for its maintenance. The parents paid up splendidly, but our first teacher had a trying and difficult time of it, and at the end of the first quarter begged to be removed to more civilised surroundings. The next teacher was a much older man, not so smart as the first, and hopelessly destitute

of disciplinary powers, but he was a good and faithful worker, and gladly bore the terrible trials that beset a teacher in those difficult surroundings. Every other teacher that we approached refused to go to this desolate place, so we were obliged to keep on this old man and in the end he did most excellent work. On one of my inspections in the silk season, I was horrified to find that the villagers had transferred the school to a dark, dirty hovel where the only light came through the open door. They pleaded that they needed the old schoolroom for the cultivation of the silk-worms. This could not be tolerated, so I called together the chiefs, and instead of the ordinary examination from books and black-boards, I began an extraordinary examination of the children's heads and eyes. I pointed out to the astonished parents that thirty-seven of the fifty boys were suffering from some disease of the eyes, and I asked them whether

their children were not worth more than their worms, and whether they were wise in jeopardising the health of their boys for the sake of a few thousand cocoons. The people were alarmed, they had never thought of it before and my protest easily prevailed. It was difficult to run a school in such a benighted village, twenty miles from one's headquarters, but it was in this sort of place that a school was most needed, a veritable breeding-ground for all kinds of moral and material canker-worms. The teacher was a martyr. Just before he came to us, he was engaged as a teacher at a Greek Catholic school. After six months' work with us, the people of his former school begged him to return to their village, so he went to the Bishop, who, to my surprise, advised him to return to the Druze village of M., "for," said the Bishop, "your English master is evidently a lion, he compels these Druzes to read the Bible, which is a wonderful thing in

our country, and you must not think of leaving his service". I felt proud of the compliment and pleased at the Bishop's common-sense readiness to co-operate with us, but I often wondered whether His Holiness of Rome would have approved this piece of Modernism in his Suffragan of the Lebanon.

One of the largest Lebanon canker-worms was undoubtedly factiousness. The people seemed always to be at enmity amongst themselves. In a very small village I often visited there were three different parties who would not speak to each other, and it would have been an unpardonable sin to visit only one of the families, for like jealous children the others would have tried to injure the school from sheer spite; such was their foolishness. This was a wearisome business, but in these village schools the children of the different cliques rubbed shoulders together, and it looked as though our village work was beginning to

effectively deal with this venomous old canker-worm. Not far from the village of M., there was a flourishing village of obstinate Druzes who badly wanted a school, but the three powerful factions could not be brought to agree to our conditions, so they were compelled to do without our money, but we managed to persuade them to open two schools at their own charges, and I promised to inspect them and regulate them as if they were our own schools. A number of boys from both of these schools eventually came to our High School, where we had better opportunities of pointing out to them the extraordinary follies of their village factions.

Thus it came about that in many a dark corner of the earth the Bible was diligently read, the Gospel was preached, sometimes "even of envy and strife," sometimes of factions, sometimes of pretence, sometimes in truth, but in all cases we rejoiced that Christ

was preached, for we were confident that God's Word would not return unto Him void, and we felt sure that the best hope for the Lebanon and the Druzes would come through a knowledge of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.





CHAPTER IX.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON ON MOUNT LEBANON.



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THE BISHOP OF LONDON ON MOUNT LEBANON.

The Bishop of London paid a memorable visit to the Druzes in the Lebanon at the conclusion of his tour through Egypt, the Sudan, and Palestine in March, 1912. A motor-car was sent to meet the Bishop at the Aley station of the Damascus Railway. The Druze governor of the district, accompanied by his officers, greeted his lordship as he alighted from the train. A squad of Scout lads from the Mission High School formed a guard of honour as the car drew up at the school gates. They then escorted the Bishop along the branch road, which had been specially repaired by the

villagers and the schoolboys, to the spacious school playground. Here an enormous company of Druzes eagerly awaited the Bishop's arrival. Three Syrian doctors acted as interpreters, and the hoary-headed sheikhs poured into the Bishop's ears their fulsome flatteries and their solemn protestations of eternal friendship with all the British race, and especially with his lordship from the great city of London. Dr. Ingram was in one of the happiest of his jovial moods, and his felicitous replies deeply touched the hearts of his hearers. His utterances were printed in most of the Arabic newspapers of Syria, and resounded in all corners of the Lebanon. He commended them for the harmony and the friendship in which the Druzes and the Christians now live together in these beautiful mountains, and he promised to lend his best support to every effort made for bringing educational advantages to the children of the Druzes, whilst they in

their turn offered their very heartiest co-operation.

Canon Campbell, the founder of the Hosanna League which became responsible for the extensive educational work in the villages, was present on this festive occasion, and wrote the following interesting account of the Bishop's visit to Ain Anub :—

" That was a merry ride, down the slopes of Mount Lebanon on the 22nd of March, from the mountain railway station of Aley to the High School of Ain Anub ; not that the motor-car spun along at any unusual pace, but from the infrequency of motors in this part of Syria. A motor-car is a novelty in the Lebanon, and to-day it was treated as such. The few natives we met on the way stared at us, no doubt wondering who and what we were. The camels, the mules, and even the donkeys, I will not say displayed a little curiosity, but did not quite understand this new-world machine in-

vading their preserves. A motor-car is far too advanced for this old-world country. The donkeys performed a dance as yet unnamed even by our American cousins. We passed a string of camels who, to say the least, did not behave to visitors with extra courtesy that afternoon. The camel has an ugly habit of turning his face away from the danger and backing right into the enemy; he is as silly as he looks. Soon we were upon a string of mules bearing heavy loads upon their sides, and taking up much more than a fair share of the narrow road. They kicked violently as the motor-car came down upon them—the front one especially kicked off his load and was thereby pulled to the ground. He lay sprawling, squealing, and kicking, and the muleteers, as the Bishop was reminded, were neither praying for him nor for themselves, but were pouring maledictions in no measured words upon this unearthly motor and its occupants, their fathers, mothers, grand-

fathers and grandmothers to many generations back! The skilful English chauffeur seized an opportunity and got free of the danger. That London was not deprived that day of its Bishop, the Haifa Hospital of its doctor, the Hosanna League of its founder, and Beyrout of its chaplain, was a mercy for which individually and collectively, it is hoped, we were all duly thankful.

"Ain Anub was shortly reached, and the Bishop was received with the salute of the first corps of Boy Scouts of the Turkish Empire. These were some of the boys of the Ain Anub High School, who had been trained by Mr. Merry, the English master.

"There was no time to be lost, for the afternoon was on the wane, the Bishop had to reach Beyrout before sunset, and a big gathering awaited him about five minutes higher up on the playground of the boarding school. In the picture (page 102), the Druze village magnates

are seated in a row with broad white bands surrounding their heads, a distinguishing mark by which an initiated Druze may be known. The men standing round are the members of the School Committees who became responsible to the Mission for half the expenses of the schools, the parents of the children, who came from other villages to plead for new schools, and, no doubt, a fair sprinkling came from curiosity to see a Bishop of London. On the Bishop's right, some in sight and some out of sight, are the boys and girls of Ain Anub, and the villages around, where schools were recently opened, and the more enterprising boys climbed to the top of the schoolhouse in the rear. The proceedings began with the usual Eastern formalities. A band of the Ain Anub schoolgirls recited 'welcome' in clear, intelligible English, these were followed by some of the school children of Beshimoon reciting a very good, original composition, composed by

Mr. Khouri, the master, in praise of the great 'Metran' of London, who had condescended to visit them.

"The scene was moving—Mount Lebanon high up in the background studded with its many villages—down below, over the mulberry trees where the silk-worm does its busy work, and beyond the plain, are the reddish-looking shores of the Mediterranean, and farther away still stretched the blue waters of its sea. But here to-day around us, in the playground of Ain Anub High School, is the old world of the Near East merging into the fresh impulses of Western life. The Orthodox Greek Christian and the Druze uniting together and pleading with one voice, 'Come over and help us'.

"The Bishop of London, evidently moved by the surroundings, said, 'I have travelled from London to Khartoum, from Khartoum to El Obeid, some hundreds of miles farther South,

and thence to Ain Anub, but of all the scenes witnessed, this one strikes me the most deeply, and will linger longest in my memory'.

"The Bishop spoke to the point with his usual directness, declaring he would do his best in helping the Mission to bring Christian schools into the villages, and promising not to forget the petitions and pleadings of the men of the Lebanon villages who had just pleaded the cause of their children.

"This was an Hosanna League day, and marked, as nothing else could, the progress of its work. When Mr. Parfit undertook this work about four years ago, there were but seventeen children at the Ain Anub School. Two years later, when the writer stood on the top of the Mission House and looked upon the surrounding villages, he was assured that here on the Lebanon, there lay before our Church a splendid work for Christ. Such a gathering as that which met to greet the

Bishop of London would have been, in 1908, an utter impossibility, but in four years the seventeen children had grown to 351, the one school had become six, while at the same time seven other villages were petitioning for schools, prepared to guarantee half the cost, and it came to pass that before the end of the year we were able to answer 'yes' to their petitions, and open seven additional schools."

An interesting sequel to this memorable visit revealed the fact that the Bishop of London made a deep impression upon the nerves of the Turkish authorities, as well as upon the hearts of the Druzes. At the outbreak of war in November, 1914, the Druze Governor very kindly exerted himself to secure permission from the Turkish authorities to continue the school at Ain Anub, as every other British school had been closed and occupied by the Turks. With the assistance of some kind American Episcopalian friends,

he was able to secure official documents from the Turkish courts in Damascus, conveying to the care of these Americans the superintendence of our schools. When the documents arrived, it was found that the Turks had very carefully inserted a condition, according to which our American friends were permitted to take charge of the Ain Anub School on the understanding that they would carry it on for the benefit of the Druzes "*in spite of the Bishop of London*". There was no alternative, and as it made no difference to the conduct of the school, our friends submitted to the strange condition inserted in this official charge.



THE VILLAGE SCHOOL AT BENNEH

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CHAPTER X.

A VISIT TO THE HAURAN.



CHAPTER X.

A VISIT TO THE HAURAN.

The Hauran is situated on the confines of the Arabian desert, far away across the Jordan to the East of Galilee, and is one of the most inaccessible regions of the Holy Land. Its contiguity to the domains of the nomad tribes of Central Arabia has given it a peculiar interest since the revolt of the Arabs under the king of the Hedjaz. It was known to the Hebrews as the land of Bashan and is famous to-day as the Jebel 'l Druze. A few of the villages are inhabited by Christians, and a certain number of Bedouin dwell in the outskirts of the mountains, but more than 80 per cent of the inhabitants are Druzes of exactly

the same race and religion as those who dwell in the southern districts of the Lebanon. The Christians and the Bedouin live on terms of great intimacy with the Druze population, in spite of the fact that the Turkish Government persistently endeavoured to provoke the Arabs to quarrel with the Druzes, giving them assurances of official support. The Druzes, however, always prevailed, not only because of their numerical superiority, but also because in mental ability and physical powers, they were vastly superior to the Arab tent-dwellers of the Hauran. I was greatly surprised to discover that the Bedouin had become to a large extent the serfs or the servants of the Druze chiefs. I was also interested to learn that certain German travellers and other Europeans had penetrated Central Arabia from the district of the Hauran, and that the Druzes were in constant touch with some of the leading Arab tribes.

The rapid development of our educational work amongst the Druzes of the Lebanon became known to the chiefs of the Hauran, and many kindly messages reached me with urgent invitations to visit the more populous centres of the Druzes. Numbers of Lebanon Druzes held regular commercial intercourse with the Hauran villages, taking with them olive oil and other Lebanon products, and bringing back to Syria the famous Hauran wheat. Some of these men offered to escort me to this their fairyland of Bashan, and one very favourable opportunity seemed to present itself when I took charge of the village school at Bathir and received there an urgent invitation from a very influential man. The father of our teacher there had been for seven years the trusted steward of Yehia Bey Atrash, now the leading Druze chief, and since leaving his service, he spent every summer in the Hauran for purposes of trade. Every month the pro-

spects improved of my being able to plan out a journey to the Hauran under most favourable circumstances, but when at last the opportunity came, I was obliged to hurry off without any plans at all and with nothing but "Heaven's Light our Guide". A British officer from India was staying with us at Ain Anub for the purpose of learning some Arabic. He was very anxious to pay a visit to the Hauran, and as his application for extension of leave had been refused, he was compelled to make arrangements for leaving us earlier than he had anticipated and begged me to go with him on a brief visit to Bashan. On consulting my diary, I found that I was comparatively free for about ten days, and after that, on account of a projected visit to England, I should be unable to spare time for a journey to the Hauran for another two years; so I at once decided to go in the middle of September, which unfortunately proved to be the hottest

week of the year, when a scorching sirocco wind skinned our faces and filled our eyes with the powdered lava of the scorching plains and the unspeakably dirty dust of the Hauran villages. My sudden resolve had left me no time to make inquiries from the many friends who had offered to escort me to the Hauran, and my hasty endeavours to secure letters of introduction proved futile, as all my influential friends happened to be out of reach at the time. I regretted that I had not even noted the name of the place where I should be likely to find the father of our Bathir teacher, and as I had relied upon the prospect of being escorted by an efficient guide, I had failed to acquaint myself with the details of the routes and the best way to proceed from Damascus to the headquarters of the different chiefs.

We started, however, with a few maps and notes and with as little baggage as possible. We took the train from Aley to Damascus,

and after depositing our baggage at one of the hotels, I suggested to my companion that we should at once go for a walk to see something of the town, in the hope of picking up some information at the Hedjaz railway station for our journey on the morrow. We had not gone fifty yards from the hotel when we met a Druze from our village of Ain Anub, who greeted me with some surprise and told me that he was on his way, for the first time, to the Hauran, and that he would be starting the following morning with another Druze who knew the country well. This was a piece of good fortune, and we agreed to meet him with his friend later on so that we might arrange to accompany them. We went off to pay a visit to the British Consul, who told me he was about to write to the great chief, Yehia Bey Atrash, for the purpose of advising him about sending to an English school his orphan nephew, the heir of his older brother who had been

executed by the Turks. We were therefore asked to take a message to the chief, and the Consul advised a slight alteration in our proposed route which subsequently proved to be a great advantage.

Early on the following day, we proceeded by train from Damascus to Deraa, the Edrei of Numbers xxi. 33, where Og, the King of Bashan, was defeated by the Israelites. It is an important junction on the Damascus-Mecca railway, a town of real interest from its numerous troglodyte dwellings of great antiquity. As we stepped out of the train, I saw a man crossing the lines whom I immediately recognised as one of my old students of the English College in Jerusalem. If I had not hastily shouted to him he would have disappeared amongst the crowd and we should have seen no more of him, but after a very hearty greeting, he informed me that since taking his medical degree at Beyrout he had

settled down as the doctor of this district and, as he knew the Druze villages well, he would be glad to do anything for us that we might need. This was certainly another stroke of good fortune and we prepared to follow his advice. He told us of an intimate friend of his who would be the very best man to help us; that we should find him established in the last tent on the left-hand side of the new rail head at Bozrah. Armed with his introductions we started off after lunch by train to Bozrah Eski Sham, the ancient capital of Bashan, where we saw some most interesting Roman ruins. An ancient high road leads from Koweit in the Persian Gulf, right through Arabia to this ancient town. It was here that Mohammed is said to have met the Christian monk, Bahira, when accompanying his uncle on his famous journeys to Syria. Here also is an interesting house of a Jew, which, tradition declares, illustrates the justice

and integrity of the Khalif Omar. The Jew had been forcibly ejected from his house, which occupied the best site in the city, and a mosque had been built in its place, but when the Khalif heard of the injustice, he ordered that the mosque should be removed. A new house on the same site was erected for the Jew and another mosque was built close by, known now as the mosque of Omar, and close beside it are the ruins of the house of the Jew.

The new railway line from Deraa is to be continued to Salkhad, but at the time of our arrival the rail head was still about a mile short of Bozrah, so that all the officials and the shopkeepers were dwelling in tents, and enormous quantities of wheat were piled up here and there, ready to be entrained to different parts of Syria. Quantities of this wheat arrived every day upon camels from the villages of the Hauran, and here it was sold to the native agents who forwarded it to Damascus

and other large towns. The Syrians declare there is no wheat in the world like the wheat of the Hauran, and its unique qualities are said to be due to the fact that the soil consists of powdered lava spread over the surface by some volcanic eruption centuries ago.

We found the doctor's Druze friend established as one of the wheat merchants in the last tent, where he entertained us most hospitably, and for the first time since leaving our civilised quarters at Ain Anub, we were regaled with a most refreshing cup of tea. We presented the introduction from the doctor, and explained our anxiety to secure horses for a journey to the headquarters of Yehia Bey Atrash. The good man assured us that it could easily be managed; he urged us to stay the night with him and to rest ourselves while he sent a servant to Bozrah to make the necessary inquiries. Then in the course of conversation, it transpired that our good host was

none other than the father of our teacher at Bathir, the trusted steward for seven years of Yehia Bey Atrash. He was the very man I should have sought for if I had had time to make inquiries as to his whereabouts before I left the Lebanon. He was delighted to see me in this unexpected way, and to hear that I had arranged for his married son to go for a year's training to our Ain Anub School, and he immediately decided that he would send his younger son also to us the following year, which he subsequently did.

While we were discussing the object of our visit to the Hauran, a stranger entered the tent, and, after salutations, our host exclaimed, "You are just the man we want". He proved to be Yehia Bey's chief messenger, who had come on an errand from his master connected with the sale of wheat, and was returning to the chief's headquarters that very night. He quickly found us the horses we required, and

in a short time we were on our way to Yehia Bey's mountain village, escorted by the chief's own servant for our guide. We had already made a remarkably rapid journey to the Hauran, and had met with an extraordinary amount of good fortune on our way; it continued to follow us, for soon after starting from the tent we met another Druze chief who stopped Yehia Bey's servant and inquired as to who we were and what we were doing. When the servant explained my mission, the chief expressed his delight at hearing about it, and said he had been waiting to see me for the purpose of opening up negotiations for sending his three sons to our boarding school at Ain Anub. I was exceedingly thankful for this further co-incidence which saved me at least a day's journey to the chief's village. We now pressed on as the sun had set, but guided by the light of a glorious moon and enjoying the cool

breezes of the mountains after a dusty, hot day in the plains, we arrived safely at Yehia Bey's mediæval castle, where we were met in the moonlight outside the magnificent gate by the chief and some of his retainers, as the servant had hurried forward to give notice of our coming. We received a very hearty welcome, and as we entered the spacious courtyard we were saluted by about forty people, some of whom were the retainers and some the guests of the great chief. We were just in time to catch a glimpse of a very interesting sight. An enormous tray laden with meat and rice was brought in by four servants on a kind of bier. The tray was placed upon a decorated stone fixed in the centre of the courtyard, and at the word of welcome from the chief, a group of men squatted down around the dish and fed themselves in the customary Eastern fashion with the fingers of the right hand. A second

and a third group in turn surrounded the tray until all the guests and the servants had been satisfied with this sumptuous evening meal. Our late arrival necessitated a little delay in the preparation of a special meal, but we were at length taken to an inner courtyard, where we had an excellent supper with another of the great chiefs who was staying at the castle as the guest of his brother. I was agreeably surprised to meet this man also, for he was the only other chief I had determined to visit, and the fortunate coincidence of finding him here likewise saved me a journey to his village, for we were able to converse with him about the prospect of sending his sons to our boarding school at Ain Anub. I was also considerably helped in my interview with the chiefs by a Lebanon Druze who was one of Yehia Bey's guests that greeted us on our arrival. He had been educated in an American Mission School,

he spoke English well, and having visited us at Ain Anub was able to confirm my statements about the school as well as remove any suspicion that may have lingered in the minds of the chiefs as to my identity, since I had hurried away without letters of introduction from the Emirs of the Lebanon. We stayed two nights with Yehia Bey and saw something of his flour mills and the villages around. On the third day we journeyed with him to Deraa, and thence took the train back to Damascus, when my companion parted from me for his journey to India via Baghdad, while I returned to Ain Anub deeply gratified at the success of my hasty trip to the Hauran.

On the following Sunday I had breakfast in Baakleen with the chairman of the Druze Education Society, who told me he had just received £10 from a Hauran Druze in America, who was anxious for a school to be opened in

his native village, and another £10 from the villagers of Ahirah in the Hauran. He was prepared to place these sums at my disposal as soon as I could find teachers who would go to these villages in the Hauran.



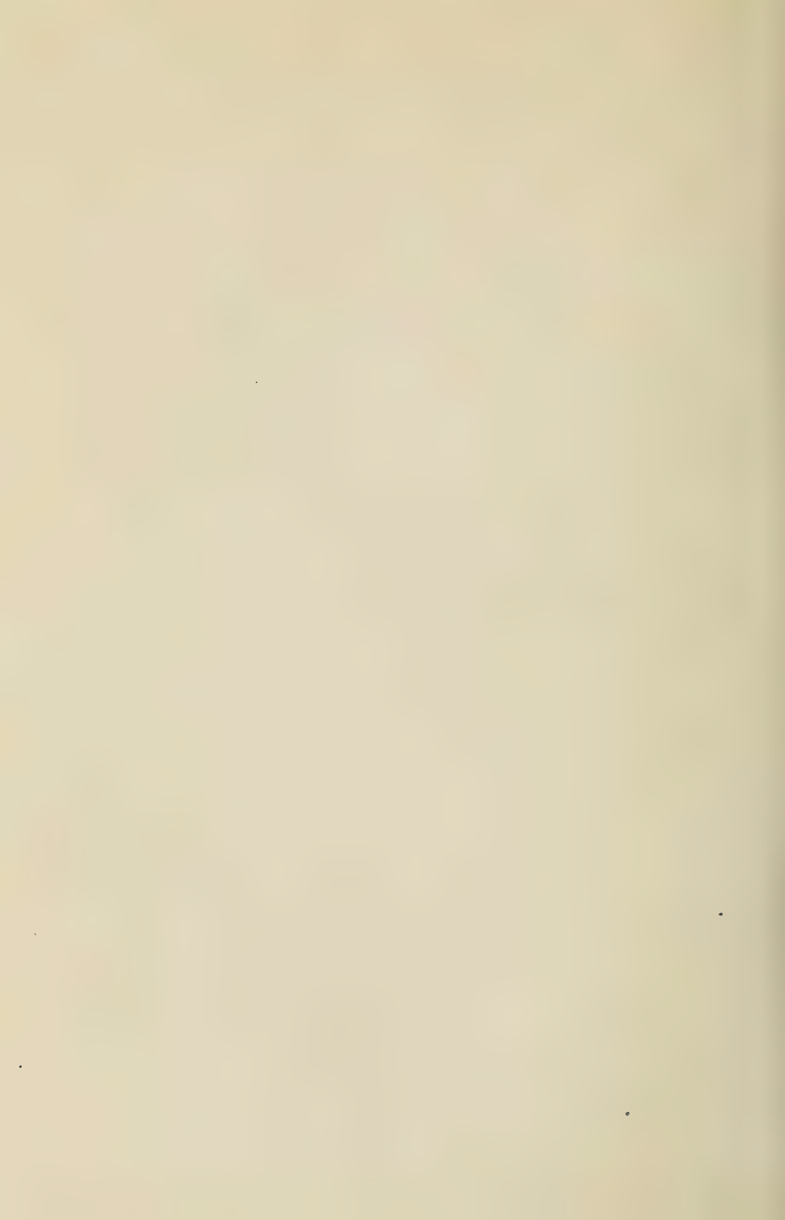
THE TEACHER'S HOUSE OF VILLAGE SCHOOL AT BATHIR, BUILT ON THE EDGE OF A PROTRUDING ROCK OVERLOOKING A DEEP VALLEY 2000 FEET BELOW

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CHAPTER XI.

ABD 'L MESSIEH: SERVANT OF CHRIST.



CHAPTER XI.

ABD 'L MESSIEH: SERVANT OF CHRIST.

SHORTLY before I left Jerusalem in 1907, I became deeply interested in two converts from Mohammedanism who had been led to CHRIST by the influences of a C.M.S. Medical Mission. Through the fanaticism and cruelty of some of their relatives, they had been arrested upon trumped-up charges, and had been brought to Jerusalem to be ruthlessly cast into an unwholesome Turkish dungeon. Every effort was made by the missionaries to secure their release, but it was only after six months' suffering, sickness, and semi-starvation that the men were brought up for trial, and discharged as innocent of the charges brought against them. The experience would have easily crushed the

zeal out of any sham convert, for besides the sufferings in prison, one of them came out to find himself homeless and forsaken by wife and child. His house had been sold whilst he was in prison in order to meet the demands of corrupt Turkish officials, and when he returned to his village he was compelled to write a divorce for the release of his Moslem wife.

Their trials were by no means ended with their release, for shortly afterwards they were forced into military service, and speedily dispatched to that ill-fated Yemen from which but two in ten return.

Nothing more was heard of them until, one stormy night in 1911, an ill-clad Arab came shivering up to the door of our schoolhouse in Lebanon and begged for a private interview with the English minister. The suspicious-looking character was led to my study, where, after being refreshed with a cup of coffee, he courteously apologised in rich classical Arabic

for his appearance, and for troubling me with a visit on such a night at such an hour. His speech and manners betrayed the fact that he was no ordinary beggar, so I politely asked him to tell me his name. After cautiously closing the door lest a third person should hear our conversation, a smile appeared on his haggard features, while he startled me by saying that his name was Abd 'l Messieh. "What! Servant of Christ?" I exclaimed. "Are you then a convert to Christianity?" "Yes, indeed, I was baptised in the town of A.; for nearly three years I have been in Yemen, and six months ago I escaped with thirty-four companions, only two of whom have survived to reach Beyrout with me in safety. Most of the others were buried by our own hands in the sands of Arabia as they succumbed one by one to hunger, thirst, and the privations of the journey." I now began to realise, as he proceeded with his touching story, that he was

one of the two converts who had been imprisoned in Jerusalem. When he found that I recognised him, he was overcome with joy and burst into tears. He had not met with a Christian friend for over three years, but upon his arrival in Beyrout he felt so exhausted and ill that he determined to find out the English minister and die, if God should so wish it, in a Christian home. It took him nearly a day and a half to drag his tired body nine miles up the mountains to Ain Anub, where we gladly provided him with every comfort that would help towards his restoration to health. At the Mission Hospital, where he was converted, he had learned something of the laws of health, and had made the best use of his knowledge all along the dangerous journey through Arabia. He was also a man of great self-control, of temperate habits, and a powerful physique, which doubtless combined to preserve him from the fate of his more unfortunate com-

panions. His joy knew no bounds when he found that Providence had led him safely to a friend in need, and as strength began to return to him, he found relief in giving me details of his extraordinary journey.

The trials and sufferings of the soldiers in Yemen, he said, were unspeakably hard to bear. The food and the water were alike as bad as they could be, and the troops were decimated by the scourge of the guinea-worm. The monkeys swarm in the coffee plantations like flocks of sheep, and in some districts where the soldiers are encamped they have to discover their water supply by following the track of the monkeys and finding out where they quenched their thirst. It is in such districts that so many soldiers are attacked by the guinea-worm, some of which he declared to be more than a yard in length.

A hundred and fifty soldiers resolved one day to make a dash for freedom. Some of

them went south with the hope of reaching Aden, but Abd 'l Messieh, with thirty-four comrades, questioned the possibility of being able to pass the numerous Turkish sentries, and resolved to travel by the longer route to the north. They discarded their military uniform, and started off in an almost naked condition to beg their way as dervishes amongst the Arab tribes. They passed through the Beni Zahran without any mishap, but the Beni Marwan firmly believed they were Turkish soldiers and capable of swallowing money which they could afterwards produce at will. The discovery of an Albanian amongst the party, who could not speak Arabic, confirmed their suspicions. The Turk is their bitterest enemy, whom they call by the opprobrious name of "Rumi," applied in earlier days to the "infidels" or Christians of the Byzantine Empire. The pronunciation of a Turkish word is almost as good as a death sentence

amongst them, so they promptly dispatched the unfortunate Albanian and were proceeding to similarly dispose of his comrades, when Abd 'l Messieh rushed to the presence of the sheikh, fell on his knees before him and clutched at his belt. His knowledge of their customs saved the rest of the party, for the sheikh's honour was at stake if he refused to grant a temporary suspension of the process of execution. It was subsequently discovered by the tribesmen that Abd 'l Messieh could read the Koran, which sealed him at once as a holy man to whom much additional sanctity was accorded when he told them that he came from Jerusalem. They accepted his explanation of the tattoo marks upon his arms that were made by his mother for ornament and not a sign of his being an officer in the Turkish Government; so the company was allowed to proceed, only however, to encounter other sufferings of hunger and thirst. For

days our informant kept a piece of lead in his mouth to stave off the madness of thirst, until his lips became quite sore. The poor men found very little to eat amongst some of the poorer Arab tribes, and it was a great luxury for him to receive one day a present of twenty-eight dates, ten of which he gave to his companion, ten he ate himself, and eight he reserved for the next day's provision for them both. These were dreary days, as the diminishing band journeyed through the famous Jebel Asir to the Bahr Sallam, whence they began to cross Arabia, spending a short time with Ibn Saood and afterwards with Ibn Raschid, but Abd 'l Messieh made the best of it, and told me of some amusing little tricks he played upon his companions to dispel the appalling monotony of the way.

The account he gave was of peculiar interest to me from a geographical and political, as well as a missionary, point of view. I have

followed with sympathy the fortunes of Ibn Saood, so closely connected with the stirring developments at Koweit and British interests in the Persian Gulf. He was by far the most powerful chief in Arabia, and he tenderly cared for Abd 'l Messieh simply by way of patronising one who claimed to be a friend of English missionaries.

The travellers had a very different reception when they reached the territory of Ibn Raschid who quickly handed them over to a Turkish guard. Four times, after successive imprisonments, they effected their escape and eventually got clear of the territory under Turkish rule.

Our informant confirmed the truth of current rumours that the opening up of Arabia seems not far distant. The tribes at one time acknowledged the supremacy of Ibn Raschid, who represented the Turkish authority. The Baghdad railway scheme brought to notice the harbour of Koweit, where there is now a town

of growing importance under British protection, at the head of the Persian Gulf. In order to crush the rising power of the Sheikh of Koweit, the Turks incited their representative, Ibn Raschid, to make war upon him, with the intention of taking possession of a strip of territory to be given to the Germans for the terminus of the Baghdad Railway. To the dismay of the Turks, Ibn Raschid was defeated by Ibn Saood and Mubarak Ibn Sabah, Sheikh of Koweit, who penetrated into the interior and actually occupied Hail, though this was subsequently evacuated at the advice of the British Consulate-General. Ibn Raschid remained Governor of Hail, and continued to represent the feeble remnants of Turkish authority in the interior of Arabia. The majority of the tribes, however, transferred their allegiance from Ibn Raschid to Ibn Saood, the ally of the famous Mubarak, Sheikh of Koweit, and the man who now

practically rules the interior of the Arabian peninsula from Hail to Yemen.

Further details of our convert's journey are of special interest to all who pray for the enlightenment of the sons of Ishmael. Many attempts have been made, with very little success, to carry the Gospel to the Arab tribes of the interior, and many a missionary would have given all he was worth for the privilege enjoyed by this destitute wanderer, Abd 'l Messieh. He told me that when he reached the tents of the large tribe known as the Beni Saood, he was honourably entertained for ten days and encouraged to tell all he knew about the Christian Faith. He made no secret of his conversion, and enjoyed complete freedom to state the arguments upon which he based his convictions. He became quite excited as he told me the wonderful story of his ten days' "Evangelistic Mission" in the heart of Arabia, and he was not slow to acknowledge

the Providence of God that had prepared him for so high and noble a service. I was astonished at his knowledge of the Koran and the Sacred Scriptures as well as the indications of his familiarity with points of Moslem controversy. He was able to quote long passages from memory—his arguments were faultless—full of sound logic and free from fanatical prejudices. I never met a man who could wield the "Sword of the Spirit" with such agility. Here was a heaven-taught disciple, a truly converted Moslem, a remarkable evidence in himself of the truth and the power of Christianity.

In answer to my inquiry about the other convert who was imprisoned with him in Jerusalem and who travelled with him to Yemen, he informed me, with painful solemnity, of his death at Kamaran in the Red Sea —a faithful servant to the last of His Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I saw Abd 'l Messieh again two years afterwards; he had recovered his health and had made up his mind to live the live of a wandering religious dervish. He was going, he said, to beg his way amongst the Druzes of the Hauran and thence once more into Arabia; clothed in the garb of a Fakir and living on the simplest food in order to preach the Gospel in his own unorthodox way to the Arabs of the Peninsula. Nothing could dissuade him from what seemed to be a wild and dangerous enterprise, but one could sympathise with the restless enthusiasm of a man who had lived a life so full of change, who had drunk so deeply the cup of woe, whose soul was full of burning zeal for God, whose only joy was to serve his Master till his tired worn body would find eternal rest when his spirit had sped away to eternal joys. We wished him God-speed and we shall prob ably hear no more of this remarkable man until the morning breaks and the shadows flee away.

Many important events have taken place in Arabia since I said "good-bye" to Abd 'l Messieh. Ibn Saood, the great chief of Riadh, has rendered essential service to Great Britain for which he has received the honour of knighthood. He visited Koweit in 1917, and declared to a British official there his readiness to facilitate the opening up of Central Arabia to British commercial enterprises. If all goes well, it is probable that some day the railway line from Mount Carmel which runs through the Druze mountains of the Hauran, will be extended to Central Arabia and Koweit in the Persian Gulf.

On this visit to Koweit, the great chief also renewed his acquaintance with Dr. Mylrea of the American Mission. Accompanied by the important Sheikhs of Mohammerah and Koweit, he paid a public tribute to the worth of the Christian Medical Mission by calling at the Mission House, thoroughly inspecting the

hospital, and by chatting pleasantly for half an hour with the Mission workers over the customary sherbet and coffee.

A short time afterwards, one of Ibn Saood's men was asked by a colporteur, "When shall we be allowed to visit the Nejd?" The Arab replied, "We have now become brothers, and whenever the Sheikh gives the formal permission, you will receive a hearty welcome. There is now no difference between us, for our chiefs have called upon yours, and we see that the English Government is clean and straight, so very different to the Turkish Government with its bribery and corruption."

It may be that Abd 'l Messieh has already found his way to Nejd, for he determined when he left me in Beyrout that his bones should rest amid the desert domains of Sir Abd 'l Azeez Ibn Saood.

A friend is a second self and a third eye.

A true man is he who remembers his friend when he is absent, when he is in distress, and when he dies.

If your friend is sweet, do not eat him up.

You may find in a friend a brother who was not born of your mother.

Friendship may come down by inheritance from ancestors, and so may hatred.

Without human companions, Paradise itself would be an undesirable place to live in.

—*From "Arabian Wisdom," by Dr. Wortabet.*

The school children at Ainab greeting the Canon Missioner by singing "God Save our Gracious Canon"

[See page 172

Reception of the Canon Missioner at Beshimoon

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CHAPTER XII.

VISITING THE VILLAGES.



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VISITING THE VILLAGES.

A Syrian friend from one of the Lebanon villages remarked to me one day that the people were sorry I had not visited them for such a long time. "But," I replied with astonishment, "this is not true, for I have been there four times quite recently on my way to Beyrout, when I examined the schools and hastily saluted some of the people." "Oh," said he, "they don't call it a visit unless you go and have a meal with them." I shuddered at the thought of the ordeal I had tried to avoid, reluctantly consulted my diary, saw that I was free the next day, but that after that I was booked up for a fortnight: so I promised to be there for lunch on the morrow. Accord-

ingly I arrived in good time and was welcomed by a small crowd of leading villagers who led me to a reception room where I was regaled with sickly lemon water to " refresh " me after my hot ride. I suggested lunch first, as it was now noon, and the afternoon for school business, but they looked at each other in despair and suggested that it would be better to see the schools first. So off we went in a body to the terrified youngsters who were dying to escape for their midday meal. I saw it was not a time for serious inspection, so I allowed the teachers and children to "show off" their special accomplishments, I flattered the villagers on the intelligence of their offspring, talked nonsense to them as we strolled back to the guest hall, about my own shortcomings and their kindly hospitality, and put them all in a good humour for the serious business of the afternoon. This began with an enormous bowl of Frangy soup choked full of rice,

macaroni, and vegetables galore, then came three dishes of well-oiled meats with huge chunks of fat as a special delicacy for their gaunt lean guest, followed by a gorgeous variety of sweet pastries floating in melted sugar, preserved dates, and a remarkable set of preparations of nuts. We finished up with the usual café noir, Arab ablutions, and Turkish cigarettes. After a little noisy conversation we adjourned to the new house of the Druze Sheikh, beautifully situated on the brow of the hill at the head of the village. We complimented him upon his beautiful new home, made more beautiful, he said, by the radiance of my countenance, and before I could recover from my embarrassment his dusky maid produced an enormous tray filled with rich pastries and delicious sweetmeats. I ventured an Eastern compliment that the Sheikh's sweets were the sweetest in the Lebanon, made more sweet by the honey of

his lips, and was consequently compelled to sample everything. I hoped this was the end of our feasting, but when I begged leave to depart, another member of the school committee asked how I could think of leaving without honouring his household. So away we went down to the lower village, where we were again received as though we had just arrived from a hot and hungry voyage. Syrups and coffee this time formed the major part of the entertainment, and in spite of all my humble efforts, I feel that I lamentably failed to make a martyr of myself with becoming courtesy and grace.

Come what may, I at length felt bound to make an emphatic demand for my horse, and when safely mounted, I bowed, smiled, thanked them warmly, and profoundly apologised for my hasty departure, then spurred my horse for a vigorous gallop to Beyrout. I consulted my medicine chest before I went to bed, but there

was nothing that could save me from the cruel kindness of my friends. I slept little and dreamed much, I reeled with giddiness when I arose to dress, and for two days was obliged to work with a racking headache and enfeebled limbs.

Our Syrian friend from this village subsequently reported that my visit was highly appreciated and the schools have greatly benefited by this official inspection! It made such a difference to the educational work when the missionary did his duty and properly visited the villages!

The village of Deir Koble is beautifully situated on the foremost range of hills that rise abruptly from the plain of olive groves which separates Beyrout from the Lebanon. The hill-side is covered with pines and olive trees, while the deep valley below the school-house is filled with apricots and almonds. The villagers are a friendly and hospitable

race, Druzes and Christians living together in exceptional concord. This is accounted for by the fact that some of them have visited European lands and many have children now living in Jamaica and West Africa, where they learn to discard the religious animosities that so sadly separate the people of the Lebanon.

Early one morning, I started out from Ain Anub to proceed to Deir Koble for the opening of a new school. My path lay through Beshimoon, where I visited the school and carried off the head master, as well as the new teacher for Deir Koble, who was awaiting me there.

From Beshimoon, we walked for an hour along a dangerously narrow ridge on the mountain-side, with a deep valley below. My fellow-travellers regaled me with the story of a young Druze, who had quarrelled with his father, and left the house in anger, expressing a wish that his father would speedily die;

but his father was a holy man, as the sequel to the story unquestionably proved, to the satisfaction of the villagers! God, they said, quickly avenged this impious imprecation, for, on the very same day, as the young man was passing along this dangerous path with a load of wood on his back, he suddenly slipped at this very spot, said my guide, and there at that spot eighty feet below, he broke his neck, and was carried home a corpse.

As I had to visit this village frequently, travelling on horseback from Ain Anub to inspect the Deir Koble school, I was glad to discover a better, though a longer road, by which we subsequently returned.

Arrived at the village, we were cordially welcomed at the house of the leading Christian, who at once refreshed us with cool drinks, sweets, and coffee. The women of the household and their relatives, to the number of six in all, were commandeered to provide us with

a dinner. I overheard one of them rebuke an importunate neighbour with the remark: "How can you bother me to-day when I have guests in the house?" Everything had to give place to the obligations of Eastern hospitality.

Whilst the preparations for our feast were going on, we were taken to the house of another leading Christian, where a large company of Druzes had been gathered together, and special seats were set in the midst of the company for myself and the new teacher. A mass of compliments were showered upon us for fully twenty minutes by the Druze Sheikh and other distinguished villagers, for Easterns have a wonderful aptitude for saying pleasant things at appropriate seasons. I also had an opportunity of philosophising upon the subject of education, religion, and politics, etc., before an attentive audience. In the course of time we came to business, and thanks to the ability

of our Beshimoon teacher, we were able to settle the necessary preliminaries for the opening of the school. The greater part of the money promised by the villagers for the first half year was paid down at once, and on behalf of the Hosanna League, we, on our part, undertook to pay our portion into the school funds and to open a boys' school and a girls' school on the following Monday.

A sumptuous repast awaited us upon returning to the house of our first host. This finished, we inspected the schoolrooms *en masse*, paid a few visits to leading villagers, finishing up with a stately call upon the Sheikh, who insisted upon our having a "mouthful" before we could take our departure. This turned out to be a royal spread of dainties and fruits, neatly served on an enormous brass tray, around which twelve of us sat and feasted, while the Sheikh himself stood at attention with true Eastern courtesy, telling us

stories and multiplying his compliments and blessings upon us, as becometh an Eastern host.

As I was riding from Ain Anub one day to one of the villages, I overtook a Syrian doctor, also on horseback, and while we rode together we talked about the smallpox which was raging in some of the Lebanon villages. He was able to tell me of Deir Koble, where we now had two schools supported by the Hosanna League. Early in the year four cases of smallpox suddenly appeared in the village quite near the boys' school, so I immediately closed the schools and removed the teachers to other work. The doctor informed me that a short time ago he was sent by the Government to Deir Koble, and the people responded to his orders with exemplary promptitude; they quickly collected the necessary quarantine dues for placing a cordon around the infected houses, and many of the people were at once

vaccinated. Consequently no fresh cases appeared, and shortly afterwards we were able to send back the teachers and re-open the schools. Very different were the stories told by the doctor concerning other villages, where the prevailing ignorance involved the Druzes in terrible suffering and loss. At one village where an outbreak occurred, the people ridiculed the doctor's plea for vaccination. The soldier who was placed to guard the infected house was driven from the village. A sergeant was then sent with two other soldiers, but he accepted a bribe to relax the quarantine, and presented a false report to his superiors. Very soon the disease made havoc of the villagers, and more than fifty deaths were recorded out of a population of about 1500. The contrast between the two villages was very striking, and illustrated the need of that elementary enlightenment which came with the establishment of a village school.

"The worst results of this distressing ignorance," said the doctor, "are seen in villages where there are no schools, and the children are always the greatest sufferers."

One of the most interesting events of one busy week was what we may describe as "Speech Day," or the "Examination Display," for display it certainly was, in the village of Beshimoon. The schoolhouse was much too small for so important a function, so the two priests of the Greek Orthodox Community placed their nice new church at the disposal of the school committee. What a lesson from the East of godly union and concord, to Western villages so often sadly torn by party strife! A Western Churchman, wholly unacquainted with the ideas of the East, would have been shocked to see this gay assembly crowded into the nave of the church. I was startled upon my arrival to see what had been done, but I could not condemn them, for they took

the matter so seriously and earnestly that I suspected they thought they were conferring honour upon the building by celebrating this most solemn occasion within its walls, and there was no other building in the village that could accommodate this great concourse. It was evidently *the* event of the year in the village. Seriously and reverently every one of the ninety children stood in turn on the chancel steps before the embroidered curtain that screened the sanctuary from the nave, to answer my questions, or to recite their Arabic poems, which were sometimes grave and sometimes gay. The villagers, arrayed like the children in their best, sat patiently for four hours listening to the display of juvenile learning. The Druzes present were as numerous as the Christians. They followed every paltry detail with tireless interest, and all alike responded warmly to the exhortations I gave them after the distribution of prizes to

successful pupils. A sort of Passion Play was organised to conclude the proceedings of this memorable day, but hunger and fatigue compelled me to withdraw, and I left the assembly to sit it out till the end. The "examination" from the children's point of view must have been a very tiring one; from the villagers' point of view it was a very enjoyable one; and from the examiner's point of view it was a very successful one. The upper classes gave evidence of having been remarkably industrious, and the elementary knowledge acquired by all the scholars was exceedingly good.

The photograph on page 41 was not taken in England, though it might well be mistaken for a photograph of a squad of English Boy Scouts. The lads were, in fact, all Turkish subjects, and most of them were Druzes. They all belonged to our High School at Ain Anub, where the elements of scouting were being learned by the boys with much

enthusiasm. The instruction proved to be most serviceable in helping the teachers to develop some amount of nobility of character in the pupils, and the uniform was just the very thing for these mountain lads.

There is a little Greek Orthodox Church close by the schoolhouse. It cannot lay claim to a solitary window, and its "bell" is nothing more than a strip of iron suspended on the roof. We were startled early one morning by the tinkling of this "bell," and upon looking out of our window, we saw the priest on the roof of the church sitting upon a low stool with a stone in each hand, hammering out the chimes. Upon inquiry, we learned that it was a great feast day, dedicated to St. George, so we decided to proclaim a half holiday for the school, and, in honour of England's patron saint, away marched the scouts in full uniform, through some of the neighbouring villages. Our lads were greatly

admired, and much credit was due to our scout-master, Mr. Merry, for his success in drilling this primitive squad, which was the first, and at that time the only squad of Boy Scouts to be found in the Ottoman Empire.

Many Europeans who came to visit us expressed their admiration of the Scouts, as for example in a letter to Canon Campbell, Mr. Arthur W. Sutton wrote:—

"It is a great pleasure to send you a few words in commendation of the most excellent school work I saw at Ain Anub and Beshimoon. My daughter and I drove up to Ain Anub from Beyrout and spent a delightful time there amongst the boys and girls and their teachers, all of whom seemed so bright and happy and realising something of their advantages in contrast with so many in neighbouring villages who are entirely without the privileges they enjoy.

"As we had not time to go to Beshimoon,

the head master brought the Hosanna League School up to us at Ain Anub, and in the photograph both schools appear grouped together. I was particularly pleased with the head masters of the Ain Anub and the Beshimoon Schools, and it struck me you were most fortunate in having men of such character and attainments in charge of the two schools.

"Canon Parfit had told me of the Boy Scouts, but I little expected to see such a fine troop of thirty to forty lads, keen, intelligent and benefiting like our English boys do, by the training and discipline which scoutcraft always gives when properly supervised.

"I fully appreciate the self-denying work to which the chaplain, Mr. Cheese, is so readily devoting himself. Although cut off so entirely from the outside world, Mr. Cheese seemed perfectly happy in his work, and his

presence must of course be a great help in every way.

"I wish all your readers could have seen what we saw, and they would then look back thankfully, as I do, upon this very happy and bright spot on the Lebanon mountains."

Amongst other interesting visitors to the Lebanon we welcomed on one occasion Dr. Gwynne the Bishop in Khartoum who kindly accompanied me to the distant village of Baakleen. As the carriage entered the village I caught sight of a Lebanon soldier waving frantically to the driver. As soon as the carriage stopped the soldier disappeared round the corner, and I warned the Bishop that something interesting was about to happen. The carriage proceeded slowly, and as we turned the corner, the Lebanon guard of honour presented arms, and the local officers approached the Bishop to invite him to the Government Serai. The Bishop at once descended and

followed the officials to the reception hall, where we were entertained for half an hour with much kindness and courtesy. His lordship was wearing a tweed suit for rough mountain travelling, and was unprepared for this sudden official reception, but he proved equal to the occasion and made an excellent impression upon the assembly by the interesting things he told them in Arabic about General Gordon and Khartoum.

The Rev. Canon S. Campbell, who did so much for the village schools, was our most regular visitor and accompanied me annually on a tour around the villages. The people got to know how much we were all indebted to him and invariably made an effort to accord him a particularly hearty welcome. The children of Beshimoon on one occasion came out with palm branches to meet the Canon, and the procession was an imposing one when ninety children shouldered their

palms and sang Arabic hymns while they escorted the Canon to the schoolhouse, accompanied by the teachers, the priests, and the Sheikhs of the village. I was greatly amused on another occasion when drawing near to one of the villages I noticed the school children with the teacher coming round a bend in the road to meet us. I jumped out of the carriage with my camera in order to take a snapshot while the Canon went forward to greet the procession. Just as the carriage stopped the children began to sing our National Anthem in English, but to my astonishment it had been adapted for the occasion and I nearly spoiled my photograph as I shook with laughter on hearing the words,

> God save our gracious Canon,
> Long live our noble Canon,
> God save our Canon.

The teacher explained that on a previous visit the Canon did not understand the pæan

of praise which had been specially composed for him in Arabic, and as he was unequal to an original composition in English, he had made use of our well-known National Anthem.

In travelling you will find health and profit.

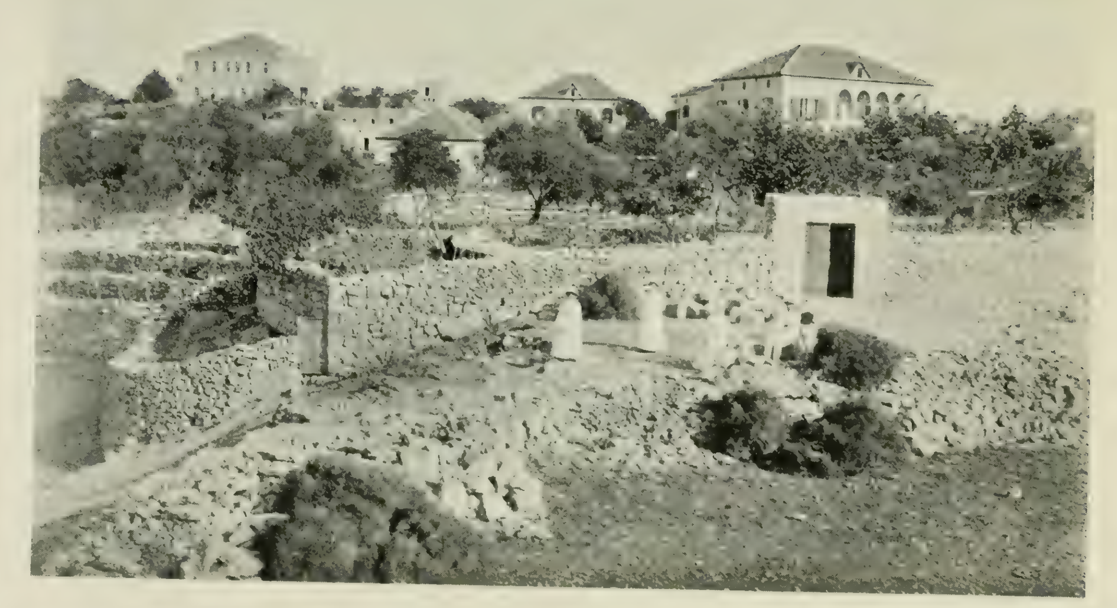
If water stagnates long it becomes foul.

A roaming dog is better than a couching lion.

During a journey a man's character is weighed and revealed.

The day on which a journey is begun is half the journey done.

—From "Arabian Wisdom," by Dr. Wortabet.



The Hospital, Dispensary, and Medical Mission buildings at Baakleen



CHAPTER XIII.

A JOURNEY'S END.



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CHRISTMAS DAY, 1912, is a day we shall ever remember for its unusual blending of gladness and gloom. The sun rose over the Lebanon hills upon an almost cloudless sky; there was hardly a ripple upon the blue sea in St. George's Bay where three British, one American, and two French warships, lay at anchor, decorated for the feast, presenting an aspect of preparedness for a naval review.

The bells of the Maronite churches had been ringing merrily from midnight till dawn. At the first glimmer of light our children sprang from their beds to eagerly search for their presents from Santa Claus. They were merry enough now, thank God, though our house-

hold was still in quarantine, for we were passing through a season of German measles. It was therefore a specially glad morning for us when all were sufficiently restored to enjoy the opening festivities of Christmas Day.

Our little church was prettily decorated, but we anticipated that the attendance at our services would be small, for we knew that some of our congregation, who feared infection for their children, would attend Divine Service on one of the British cruisers, and my wife and children must absent themselves on account of the quarantine.

Our two celebrations of Holy Communion were nevertheless very well attended, and, to our surprise, the church was almost filled at Morning Prayer. The Rev. J. E. Cheese from Ain Anub was with us, and our bright helpful services made this Christmas morning a time of real festivity and joy. With thankful hearts we were about to sit down to our

Christmas feast when a startling telegram announced the sudden death of Miss Kitching, the devoted Superintendent of the Medical Mission in Baakleen. It asked me to go at once to the assistance of the ladies in this isolated station in the Lebanon twenty miles away.

To ride there was impossible, for the barometer was falling and the gathering clouds predicted the approach of one of our winter storms. I sent out messengers to find a conveyance, and at length an Ain Anub carriage was secured, and at 3.30 p.m. I started off on my sad errand. The horses had come that morning from the mountains and were not fresh enough for a nine hours' journey by the direct route up these difficult mountain roads, so we decided to go by Ain Anub, which we reached in drizzling rain at 6.30 p.m. I gave instructions to rest the horses for four hours, and going to the schoolhouse I made a hasty

Christmas supper of sandwiches and cheese, and lay down to snatch a little sleep before resuming our journey.

Our school servant roused me at 10.30 p.m., and by 11.15 the horses were harnessed and we were once again on our way to Baakleen up the steep zigzag roads that lead through Shimlan. It was now bitterly cold, and one felt the great contrast to the atmosphere of the plain. The wind was rising, and gradually increased in violence as one ascended the mountain. A dense mist, which thickened into heavy rain and finally turned into driving sleet, obscured everything before us. I crouched down under my coverlets and tried to keep dry, but my ears and feet were painfully cold, and the hood of the open victoria was hopelessly inadequate to protect me from the driving rain. The poor driver, tightly wrapped in his mackintosh cloak and cap, braved the elements nobly, and the horses, with many

short intervals of rest, struggled on slowly for seven long hours through this chilly night of sleet and darkness. Not a living being of any kind did we meet on our way, and at 6.15 a.m. it was still dark when we came to the end of our gloomy journey, and reached the welcome portals of the Mission compound. The ever-faithful servant came quickly to our rescue, lighted a fire, and brought me everything I needed for my warmth and comfort. Then came the sorrowful greeting of the bereaved Mission workers and the story of our noble sister's departure.

On Christmas Eve, in accord with her usual custom, she gave a joyous feast to all the Christians at Baakleen. At one stage of the entertainment there was a united pulling of Christmas crackers, and the weird noise produced by the guests upon the little toy instruments created peals of laughter. The kindly hostess joined in the merriment of her guests,

and with cheery laughter sat down in a chair ; suddenly she was silent, she rolled over and was dead before her body touched the ground. The doctor was in the room and by her side in a moment, but could only pronounce life extinct as there were signs that something had gone wrong in the heart. The smile, in the midst of which she died, still remained fixed on her countenance when we buried her three days later. Suddenly from the joy of service, she passed to the joy of her Lord, but she left behind her that well-known smile of sympathy and love which brought so much joy to the many for whom she lived and died. It will remain fragrant in the memory of a multitude of those who mourn her loss.

Louisa Kitching was gifted with a unique personality. Her goodness was the gem of all her virtues, but she was also wise, intelligent, and courageous. Her dignified bearing, her commanding presence, and practical wisdom,

made her a born leader of women and of men. She was always a lady, ever unselfish, never obtrusive, and as humble as a little child. For eighteen years she had given her all to the service of the "Baakleen Medical Mission to the Druzes". Her forceful character, her unflinching courage, her faith, her love, her means, her very life, have all been given without reserve to her Master's service. It is not surprising therefore that under such leadership the Mission has achieved some remarkable triumphs. Bitter resentment has been converted into affectionate regard, hatred and persecution have disappeared, while hundreds of men and women who once cursed a Christian convert are now knocking at the door of the Church of Christ.

I can never forget the sights I witnessed in those few days. The day after Christmas was bitterly cold and stormy, but nothing could deter the hundreds of Druze women from

coming, in torrents of rain, and waiting for hours at the Mission house for an opportunity to view the body of their beloved friend. How reverent was their behaviour, how solemn and real was their quietly subdued grief! It was the deepest possible contrast to their customary conduct, but the lessons taught them by the deceased were not lost, and they were ready to do anything that she could have wished. So many things happened on this awful day of gloom that brought encouragement and joy to the weeping workers of the Mission. The weather made it quite impossible to conduct the funeral that day, but the delay gave a further opportunity of seeing some of the fruits of her labours.

There was never a brighter day than that which dawned on the Lebanon on the 27th of December, in answer to the earnest prayers of God's perplexed people. The storm was over, every cloud had vanished, and

it was now possible to complete the work at the grave and make preparations for the funeral. It is unusual for the Druzes to pay any honour to a dead woman, but this morning the men came in crowds and passed reverently around the open coffin. All the officials of the municipality came in a body to pay their last respects to the honoured benefactress of their people. With trembling voice a district Governor touchingly recalled her many virtues, a banker recounted some of her noteworthy deeds, while a young Druze doctor eulogised her holy life and Christian character, which, he said, "would live on in their hearts though she herself had gone to higher service". And thus all through the morning there came a continuous stream of families and clans into the Mission compound until every path was blocked and every corner occupied. It seemed incredible that the great throng was a gathering of Druzes, that this their chief town and the head-

quarters of their faith was hushed to silence, that every shop was closed, that the High Priest of the Druzes, all the officials, and the whole of the populace, were gathered in a Mission house to do honour to the remains of a Christian lady.

At one o'clock we gathered the Mission workers and household together, and after a brief but solemn service of prayer we closed the lid of the coffin. The young men, who are the enlightened leaders of all good works in the city, and who belong to the "Reading Room," a sort of Y.M.C.A. which Miss Kitching established, now came and carried the coffin to the courtyard below. It was placed upon a table while we read in English and Arabic, assisted by the Syrian pastor from Deir 'l Kamar, the Church of England service for the burial of the dead. An Arabic hymn was sung, and my address to this great crowd of attentive Druzes was ably interpreted by

Dr. Ali Alamuddin, the converted Druze medical officer to the Mission.

At the conclusion of the address we announced that a memorial gathering would be held, in accordance with Lebanon customs, after forty days, when all those who were longing to give expression to their sentiments would be given the opportunity they desired. A subdued murmur of approval greeted the announcement, then a moment's silence, broken only by the voice of the aged High Priest of the Druzes, who stood near the coffin and gently exclaimed, "Our Lady Miss Kitching is worthy of our highest regard". A procession was then formed to the olive grove in the Mission grounds, where the rock-hewn tomb was neatly prepared. The children of the two schools led the way, sweetly chanting a specially composed funeral dirge. The Syrian pastor and I preceded the coffin borne by the young men and followed by the Mission workers, the

officials, and the great throng of white turbaned Druzes. There was perfect silence at the grave while the committal prayers were read in English and Arabic, followed by a short appropriate address from the Syrian pastor. Before I could pronounce the benediction, an incident of striking significance occurred. Amongst the many occult customs of the Druzes there are certain sacred invocations which they will only use on specially deserved occasions. One of these is a little sacred prayer thrice repeated for the deceased. It cannot be bought with money, for only a short time ago a princess of the ruling house left a large sum by her will in order that this prayer might be said at her grave. It could not, however, be done, for her life had failed to deserve what her money could not buy. The High Priest, however, had given the hint to his followers that here was a saint to whom they must render their highest religious regard.

So by the grave of Miss Kitching, an aged Druze tenderly and briefly addressed the throng, and with one accord the thrice repeated prayer arose from a thousand tongues and a multitude of hearts, "O God, have mercy upon her!"

We sealed her tomb, and laid upon it the wreaths which her many friends had brought, then with a parting blessing to the people, as they passed out of the vineyard, we closed, with mingled sorrow and joy, this glorious chapter in the records of Christian devotion at the Mission in Baakleen.

Never before had the Lebanon witnessed such a sight—a Druze multitude, led by its religious chiefs, offering with emotion its highest honours at the grave of a Christian missionary, yea, even at the grave of a Christian *woman!* What did it mean, the whole behaviour of this anxious throng?

It meant to me that the life laid down had

not been spent in vain, that this Medical Mission had made a deep impression upon the Druzes of the Lebanon, that thousands of hearts were yearning to know more of that Divine Grace which enables men and women to live such saintly lives, and that the Christian Church owes a debt to the Druzes which it must hasten to pay. We have shaken their confidence in their ancient creeds, we have robbed them of the consolations of their former faith, we have shown them better things and higher hopes, but we have not yet led them all the way to the foot of the Cross and the Bosom of God. This, too, we must do, for it is a sacred duty which British Christians owe to the Druzes of the Lebanon.

Dr. Ali Alamuddin, the Medical Officer of the Baakleen Mission, with his Family

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Deraa. A Junction on the Hedjaz Railway, showing a heap of Hauran wheat waiting to be sent to Damascus

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CHAPTER XIV.

A REMARKABLE DRUZE DOCTOR.



CHAPTER XIV.

A REMARKABLE DRUZE DOCTOR.

A FAIRLY good proportion of the Druzes in the Lebanon are thoroughly well educated, some of them have taken degrees in Arts, Pharmacy, Medicine, Commerce, and Dentistry, some are editors of Syrian newspapers, some assistant editors of Egyptian newspapers, and some hold medical diplomas from American Universities. One of the most honest and sober-minded men I met in Syria was a well-educated, gentlemanly Druze. He was a highly-respected judge of the Supreme Court and the Chairman of an Education Society which he founded for the purpose of assisting young Druze lads to secure a University education. When I last saw him he was engaged, during his leisure hours, in

translating Smiles' "Self Help" from English into Arabic, so that he might publish it at his own expense for the benefit of the youth of the Lebanon.

Another truly remarkable man was Dr. Ali Alamuddin, the highly-cultured, well-educated, and most efficient Medical Officer of the Mission Hospital at Baakleen.

He took his degree at the American College in Beyrout, and held the Constantinople diploma as a doctor of the Turkish Empire. For nearly thirty years he worked for the Mission at his native village in Baakleen, where he wielded an immense influence for good over the many educated men of the district and amongst all the many clans and factions of the villages. He was always a diligent student, and his long daily association with the English Mission workers enabled him to acquire an acquaintance with English which far surpassed anything known to the other educated members

of his race. He was well versed in Arabic and possessing an intimate knowledge of the Bible, together with a good general knowledge of the best English and French authors, he was undoubtedly the best interpreter I came across during my twenty years' work in Turkey.

But he was also a man of sterling character. His scrupulous honesty, his remarkable tact, and his kindly interest in the welfare of the villages caused him to become a well-beloved leader of his people.

When he made up his mind in 1895 to be baptised, he at first resolved to leave the country, for such a thing as religious liberty was quite unknown in any part of the Turkish Empire, and even the educated Druzes had been unable to divest themselves altogether of religious bigotry. He decided, however, to remain at his post and on the 10th of September, 1896, he was baptised in the Mission House at Baakleen. No pressure of any sort had been

brought to bear upon the doctor by the Mission workers. He had fully considered the probable consequences of taking this important step, and he mentioned to the Mission workers his fear that his wife would probably be taken from him, but he was conscientiously impressed that it was his bounden duty to make a public profession of his convictions in baptism, whatever the consequences might be.

A storm of persecution broke out as soon as his baptism was noised abroad. His relatives and the leading members of his wife's family gathered around him and employed every means possible to compel him to recant. His mother fell at his feet in a heart-rending manner and endeavoured to reason with him, his father threatened him and declared that he would disown and disinherit him, his wife for a long time was kept from him, whilst angry men surrounded him and poured upon him many serious curses and threats of violence. The

people were incited to spit upon him as he went through the streets, and the children were taught to heap their curses upon him. He at last took shelter in the Mission House, where he was eventually joined by his wife who had succeeded in escaping from her friends. She then besought him, for her sake, to sign the Recantation Form which had been sent to him by his father, who urged the doctor to declare that he was still a Druze secretly though he had become a Christian outwardly. The doctor, however, refused, and his wife was persuaded that her husband was right in clinging to his conscientious convictions, so she decided to stay with him and share his troubles, his poverty, and persecutions. The matter was laid before the British Consul-General who happened to be in the neighbourhood, and the local Governor who was subsequently approached advised that the doctor should at once leave the district. The advice was followed, and after spending

some time in other parts of Syria he eventually made a journey to England, where he took advantage of the opportunity to increase his knowledge of medicine, after which he returned to Syria and was at last welcomed back to the village of Baakleen, where for another period of nearly twenty years he laboured happily amongst his former persecutors.

We received no news of him after the outbreak of war with Turkey until on the 31st of August, 1916, the President of the Baakleen Medical Mission sent the following letter to its subscribers and friends :—

"All supporters of the 'Baakleen Medical Mission' will grieve over the loss the Mission has sustained in the death of Dr. Ali Alamuddin, who for twenty-six years had laboured so whole-heartedly amongst the Druzes of his native town and the surrounding villages.

"News of Dr. Ali's death reached me on the 12th of August when Dr. Hoskins, of the

American Mission Press in Beyrout, spent the afternoon and evening with me. Dr. Hoskins, as a neutral, had been allowed to make the journey from Beyrout to England by the Baghdad Railway through Asia Minor to Constantinople, thence by the 'Balkan Zug' to Berlin, and from Berlin to Copenhagen, where his wife and daughters took steamer to America, while the doctor came on to England via Bergen and Newcastle. The two articles in 'The Times' of 11th and 12th August, contributed by 'A Neutral,' gave a thrilling story of the journey, and also a heart-rending account of persecutions and sufferings of the Syrians on the Lebanon and elsewhere.

"For the earlier months of the war Dr. Ali was allowed to remain at Baakleen in comparative safety, but subsequently he was called to the Turkish Army, and as an Army Surgeon did invaluable work amongst the troops in the various camps in which he was stationed. Dr.

Ali was never a robust man, and those who knew him personally can well understand what military service in the Turkish Army must have meant for one of so gentle and sensitive a nature.

"After serving for some time near Aleppo he was transferred to Damascus, and here he contracted typhus fever to which he succumbed.

"I had the privilege a few years ago of visiting Baakleen and seeing the doctor at work in the Hospital; a year or two later he stayed a few days with me in Egypt and afterwards at my home in England, and I thus shared, with many others who knew Dr. Ali personally, the great privilege of a friendship which will always be a source of inspiration, for his character was such as one seldom meets with—so truly Christian, so self-denying, so noble, and so whole-hearted in devotion to his Master's service.

"The Druzes are naturally a fine race of people, but entirely lacking in the knowledge of Christ, or of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and nothing but a miracle of grace could have made Dr. Ali what he was as a Christian. He was in every sense a cultured gentleman, and no one could have been found more fitted as a Christian convert to exercise a Christ-like influence upon his own people—an influence indeed such as is not commonly found even in a Christian country.

"Dr. Ali has, in the mercy and Providence of God, been called from the sufferings of this life to the Higher Service of the Master he loved so well, and for his sake we rejoice and thank God. Our prayers and sympathy will go out for the widow and family who, so far as we know, are at Baakleen in relative safety, excepting his sons who have been called to the army.

"The Mission buildings are now occupied by

the Turks and a Moslem school has been opened there, the Moslem teacher living in the Mission House. We are glad to know that the private property of the Mission has been 'sealed up' in one of the rooms."

On the 19th of February the Committee of this Mission passed the following resolution :—

"The Committee of the Baakleen Mission take the earliest opportunity of recording their deep heart-felt sorrow at the grievous loss sustained by the Mission in the death of their Medical Officer, Dr. Ali Alamuddin. His heroic stand for the Christian Faith from the time of his conversion, his eminent piety, his rare ability, and his many years of faithful service at Baakleen have marked him out as one of God's chosen messengers to the Druzes of the Lebanon, and the Committee have always esteemed it one of their greatest privileges to have had so remarkable a man devoting his life and energies to the service of this Mission.

"They humbly record their deep thankfulness to Almighty God for the grace given to this eminent servant of Christ and for the untold blessings his noble life have brought, not only to the Druzes, but also to all his fellow-workers who constantly held him in their highest esteem.

"The deepest sympathy of the Committee will be conveyed to Dr. Ali's widow and children at the earliest opportunity, and it is hoped that the supporters of the Mission will likewise enable the Committee to make some small provision for Dr. Ali's family at the conclusion of the war."

We hope when the war is over, to get further news of this remarkable doctor, and we trust his wife and nine children may survive the war, the pestilence, and famine that have destroyed more than half the inhabitants of the Lebanon.

All life ends in death.

When I see all paths leading men unto death, and no paths leading from death unto us—no traveller there ever returning—not one of ages past ever remaining—I see that I also shall assuredly go where they have gone.

If we are hastening to death, why all this impatience with the ills of life?

This life is a sleep, the life to come is a wakening; the intermediate step between them is death, and our life here is a disturbed dream.

Death covers all faults.

—*From "Arabian Wisdom," by Dr. Wortabet.*

The Baakleen Medical Mission Hospital and Dispensary

The Druze Girls' School at Baakleen



CHAPTER XV.

THE SECRET SECTS OF SYRIA.



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THE SECRET SECTS OF SYRIA.

THE secret sects of Syria are : (1) The Druzes, (2) The Metawilis, (3) The Ismailians, and (4) The Nosairis.

Their religious beliefs are derived from the teaching of a branch of the great Moslem Shiah sect known as the "Bâtinis" or Esoterics. This Arabic word simply means "inner," and was applied to those who held that the words of the Koran possess an inner or esoteric meaning which is far more important than the well-known laws of Islam and which can only be understood by those who are truly initiated.

The *Druzes* are divided into three classes. The Juhhâl, the Akkâl, and the Ajawîd, i.e. (1) The ignorant or uninitiated, (2) the learned

or initiated, and (3) the more excellent or principal personages amongst the initiated.

The word Druze is now, like the word Arab, simply the name given to an individual of a certain *race*, but it was originally used to denote a member of that religious *sect* whose most active apostle was a man named Derâzi. Every member of the sect became familiarly known as a Dèrazi, from which word the Arabic plural Deruz was formed. It is from this Arabic plural that we, in English, have constructed the name Druze and have naturally created the English plural Druzes, which in general use has become Druses.

In 1914 the number of the Druzes was estimated to be about 200,000. There were 15,000 males in southern Lebanon and about 50,000 in the mountains of the Hauran, the ancient land of Bashan. They are also to be found in some of the large towns of Syria, in the villages about Mount Carmel, and the

Jebel-el-Ala, south of Aleppo. In recent years many have emigrated to North and South America, Jamaica, Senegal, and Australia, where some have married English women.

Some of the older religious leaders firmly believe that the Druzes form one-third of the whole population of the globe. They think the greater part of China is peopled by their co-religionists; the more ignorant believe that the souls of the righteous go there after death to be reborn in saintly bodies, since China is regarded by many as the Druze Paradise. A Druze writer declares there is a tribe of people on the borders of Thibet whose characteristics and habits correspond very much to those of the Druzes, and who may have received the faith, he thinks, from the Bâtini missionaries of the eleventh century.

The better class Druzes are of moderately fair complexion, and many of the women are

beautiful; they are no doubt of mixed blood, descendants chiefly of Arabs, Persians, Hindoos, Jews, and Christians who inhabited the Near East at the beginning of the eleventh century.

They are a virile race of brave warriors and sturdy mountaineers, distinguished for their hospitality, chivalry, and chastity. The religious headquarters of the Druzes is at Baakleen in the Lebanon, about fifteen miles south-east of Beyrout. The name is a contraction of Beit 'l 'Akileen, i.e. The home of the learned or initiated.

The two leading Druze families are the Jumbalats and the Erslans. They are both reputed to be millionaires, but this is no doubt an exaggeration of their wealth. The Jumbalat headquarters are at Mukhtara near Baakleen, and the palace of the Erslan Emirs is at Ain Anub, a few miles to the south-east of Beyrout.

The Druzes of the Lebanon are largely occupied with the cultivation of silk-worms. They possess extensive olive groves and are mostly small farmers. The Hauran is especially famous for its very extensive wheat fields.

An initiated Druze can generally be recognised by the white turban which he wears around the red fez, and the women are distinguished in their villages by the custom of wearing a long muslin veil over their heads with which they cover the face from the gaze of the passer by, leaving, however, always one eye exposed. In the Galilee villages the Druze women do not generally veil their faces.

The *Ismailians* or Ismailîyeh derive their name from Ismail, the eldest son (who died before his father) of the sixth Shiah Khalif or Imam Jaafar-es-Sadik. The main body of the Shiahs traces the succession of the Imâmate through Musa-el-Kâthem, the second

son of Jaafar, but the Ismailians regard Mohammed 'l Habib, the son of Ismail, as the true seventh Imam. At this point they became a separate sect from the Shiahs and developed peculiar tenets of their own. There are probably 20,000 Ismailians resident in Northern Syria, chiefly near Hums, who send a yearly tribute to the Aga Khan of Bombay.

The religious headquarters of the Ismailians is at Selemyeh on the edge of the Syrian desert, where there lives a sacred girl known as the Rodhah. They believe that every female child of the sect born on the 27th day of the month Rajab is an incarnation of the deity if she should also conform to certain characteristics of height and the colour of her hair and eyes. The girl who is recognised as sacred receives divine honours at special services of adoration and the Ismailians wear bits of her clothing or hair from her person in their turbans. When she marries she is no longer

sacred and a search is made for her successor. This cult of the Rodhah is thought to be a relic of the nature worship retained by these Syrians when they accepted the weird doctrines of the early Ismailians.

The *Nosairis* or Ansariyeh are also an offshoot from the great Shiah sect of Islam. Their name, like that of the Druzes, comes from their leading apostle Mohammed Ibn Nosair, a disciple of the eleventh Shiah Imam, Hasan-el-Askari.

They inhabit the villages of the Nosairi mountains to the north of Baalbec. They are mostly agriculturalists, they grow the famous Latakia tobacco, produce wine and breed quantities of cattle. They number about 130,000, they are mostly very ignorant but are industrious and courageous peasants.

Turkish misrule is mainly responsible for the abject poverty and predatory habits of the Nosairis. A European visitor once asked the

chief of Bahluliyeh why they did not plant vineyards and fruit trees in such a beautiful piece of country that was evidently so fertile.

"Why," said he, "should I plant a tree? I shall not be allowed to eat of the fruit of it. If I repair my old house, or build a new one, higher exactions will surely fall upon me. To enlarge my fields, or increase my flocks, would have the same effect. We grow only as much corn as we can conceal in wells and cisterns. How many taxes have we to pay, and when a fresh demand will be made we never know! You see my village is full of horsemen, quartered upon us. It is always so. To-day it is money, next day barley, next day wheat, then tobacco, or butter, or honey, or Allah knows what. Then some one has been robbed somewhere or other, yesterday or some other day, or never, by somebody or nobody, it matters not. The horsemen come and take whatever they can get. Now we have nothing

left but our wives and children. Some of our people run away, and then we have horsemen quartered upon us, till we bring back the runaways, and so we are driven to desperation."

The term *Metawalli* (Arabic plural Metawileh) is the name used in Syria for those Moslems who hold to the generally accepted tenets of the great Shiah sect. In other parts of the world the members of this sect are usually called Shiahs or Shiites. The name Metawalli signifies one who is a friend or devotee of Ali, revered by all Shiahs as the rightful Khalif and true successor of the Prophet Mohammed. The Metawili are chiefly found in the villages east of Sidon, Tyre, and Acre, in the plains of the Bukaa and in the villages north-east of Tripoli.

"The Khalif vanished erst
In what seemed death to uninstructed eyes,
On red Mokattam's verge . . .
Tend we our faith, the spark, till happier time
Fan it to fire; till Hakeem rise again."

—Browning: *The Return of the Druses.*

View of the Lebanon from Ain Anub School grounds

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The Christian town of Zahleh



CHAPTER XVI.

THE RELIGION OF THE DRUZES.



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THE RELIGION OF THE DRUZES.

THE fundamental article of the Druze religion, from which also the other secret cults of Syria have derived their religious convictions, is the belief, common to all Shiahs, that the Khalif or Imam Ali was a supernatural being endowed with Divine authority. Contrary to the belief of the Orthodox Sunnis, Ali, according to the Shiahs, is much more than a *successor* to Mohammed, which is the meaning of the word Khalif, for while the prophets were the channels of Divine revelation, the Imams are the only inspired messengers capable of interpreting this revelation to mortal men.

This conviction developed into the doctrine

of the Divine right of Ali *and his descendants* to the spiritual leadership of Islam, and was gradually elaborated by the different sects into the many mysterious dogmas associated with the Imâmate.

The main body of the Shiahs believe in a line of twelve Imams beginning with Ali and ending with Mohammed Ibn Hasan-el-Askari who mysteriously disappeared about 878 A.D. at Samarra, seventy miles north of Baghdad. This twelfth Imam they say is the Mahdi or Guide who will some day reappear (as all Moslems believe) to set everything right and turn mankind to the true religion of Islam.

Some Shiah sects trace the Imâmate from Jaafar-es-Sâdik through his second son Musa-el-Kâtham, who is buried at Kathmain, three miles north of Baghdad, but the Ismailians and the Druzes trace the Imâmate through Ismail, Jaafar's eldest son. The Bâtinis taught that the Imams were incarnations of the Divine

reason, that they alone could interpret the inner meaning of the Divine law, and that therefore the knowledge of God could only be acquired through Ismail and his descendants and consequently the only true Imam was the Fâtimite Khalif of the Age. This doctrine enabled Hamza and Derâzi to proclaim the divinity of the Fâtimite Khalif El Hakim, and accounts for the toleration accorded to this monster of cruelty by those Bâtinis and Ismailians who subsequently became known as Druzes.

The argument for Hakim's claim to Divine authority is summarised as follows by Major Osborn: Said the Ismailians: "Either a man must maintain that he can acquire a knowledge of God by his unassisted reason without the intervention of a divinely commissioned mediator or he cannot do so. But if he maintains the first thesis against an opponent who holds the second, he, in the very act

of enforcing it, demonstrates its falsity, for he cannot deny that so far as his opponent is concerned, an instructor is needed. Clearly then this guide must be one incapable of falling into error. Where should such a teacher be found? Surely in the family of the Prophet."

The remarkably efficient missionaries or Dais of the Ismailians were able to lead their converts from the dogmas of the inspired Imâmate to the belief that religious knowledge could only be acquired from persons who, like themselves, were initiated in the secrets of their sect.

The Dais would puzzle the inquirer with recondite questions about difficult passages in the Koran to show that religion was a mystery known only to a few. Having persuaded him to swear that he would reveal no secrets nor swerve from implicit obedience to his spiritual instructors he would then be shown the sacred-

ness of the number seven. That as there are seven planets, seven climates, seven heavens and such-like, so there are only seven Imams and not twelve as the majority of the Shiahs believe. That Mohammed 'l Habib, the son of Ismail, was not only the last of the seven Imams, but was also the last of the seven prophets, who were Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ, Mohammed, and Mohammed 'l Habib. This last prophet and Imam alone possessed the key to all mysteries, and those who followed him ceased to be Moslems for they acknowledged a prophet posterior to Mohammed, the founder of Islam, and a revelation handed down only through the initiated, which supersedes the Koran and all that has gone before.

Further degrees of initiation were reserved for the more daring spirits who ventured to tread its secret courts, and each stage tended more and more to utter bewilderment of the

mind, to a mixture of dualism, atheism, and nihilism, to a belief that the universe was eternal, that there was no God, no law, and no such thing as religion.

These are the fundamental tenets of all the secret cults of Syria upon which each sect has accumulated its own peculiar jumble of religious convictions. There were few, however, who ventured so far, and the bulk of the modern Druzes have stopped far short of the wild conclusions reached by the unbalanced minds of the early Bâtinis.

The principal religious beliefs of the Druzes are: That God is One, that He was incarnate in Ali and lastly in the person of Hakim. That Hakim will some day return to Egypt to judge the world and weigh every man's works in a balance.

They are monogamists, and the initiated abjure the use of wine and tobacco. They do not believe in heaven or hell, but in the

constant transmigration of immortal souls from one body to another upon this earth so that the number is never increased or diminished.

In addition to the theological dogmas concerning God, they believe that Hakim appointed seven articles of faith and practice for the Druzes, viz. :—

1. Truth in speech.
2. Mutual help.
3. Renunciation of all other religions.
4. Separation from evil spirits and those in error.
5. Belief in the divinity of Hakim.
6. Acquiescence in the actions of Hakim whatever they be.
7. Absolute resignation to Hakim's orders.

"According to old laws
Which bid us, lest the sacred grow profane,
Assimilate ourselves in outward rites
With strangers fortune makes our lords and live
As Christian with the Christian, Jew with Jew,
Druze only with the Druzes."

—From "The Return of the Druses," by Browning.

Initiated Druzes of Mount Lebanon

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Lebanon Soldiers conducting an insane prisoner to the British Asylum for lunatics at Asfuriyeh, Mount Lebanon

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CHAPTER XVII.

PRESENT DAY BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS.



CHAPTER XVII.

PRESENT DAY BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS.

THE Druzes and most of the modern representatives of these secret sects are ever so much better than their creed. The simple fact is they are ordinary human beings with hearts and consciences like other mortals, and while they would be unwilling to repudiate the official creed of their religious leaders, yet they find it impossible to order their daily lives in strict accord with the illogical findings of mere philosophical theorists.

PRAYER.—The Druzes have no mosques or churches, as external forms of worship are considered unnecessary. They are not supposed to pray but they actually do pray, and a

Syrian Christian found the following beautiful prayer in an old Druze Manuscript :—

"To Thee, O God, I come, determining to do what is meet in Thy sight. Let my eye, O God, sleep in Thy obedience. Let my strength be always on the side of Thy Grace. Take unto Thyself my waking and my sleeping hours and place under Thy control my day and my night. Guard me, O God, by Thy eye which sleepeth not."

Amongst the Nosairis the men only are supposed to pray, never in the open, like Moslems, but in secret, and instead of the five Moslem prayers, they are permitted to perform the customary prostrations and simply to repeat the five names of Ali, Hasan, Hosein, Muhsin, and Fatima.

The Nosairi women never pray, nor are they ever instructed in matters of religion, for they are supposed to have no immortal souls, since woman was created on account of Satan's sin !

The Druzes on the contrary admit almost all their women to the ranks of the initiated as soon as they reach maturity.

The Metawili women also are taught to pray, and they can sometimes be seen reciting their prayers like Moslems in the open air.

Neither the Druzes nor the Nosairis use ceremonial ablutions, but the Metawilis follow the usual customs of the Shiahs and are careful to let water run from the elbow to the hand. They use a Sejdi at prayer, which is a piece of baked clay from the sacred soil of Mecca or Kerbela. It is of various shapes and sizes with an ornamental centre, and when the worshipper is at prayer it is placed before him in such a way that his forehead touches this sacred sejdi or torbah in the process of prostration.

DISSIMULATION. — The doctrine of "*Takiyah*" is a leading feature of all these sects. They believe they are justified in concealing,

whenever necessary, their own religious beliefs in order to save themselves from persecution or inconvenience. Individual Druzes in Moslem cities conform to the customs of Islam, but in their own villages they may curse Mohammed as much as they please.

They are supposed to speak the truth amongst themselves, and their religion allows them to tell lies to men of other faiths, but in practice they are no greater liars than other Easterns; they will speak the truth to a Christian as often as they will lie to a fellow Druze, and there are many educated Druzes who are as honest and truthful as the average European. The official recognition of hypocrisy has undoubtedly left a blight upon the national character.

Saint Worship.—There is an interesting belief prevalent throughout Syria that the soul of a prophet named El Khudr (i.e. The Evergreen One) passed in succession, like the in-

carnations of Vishnu, into Phinehas, Elijah, and St. George. The Jews speak of him as Elijah, or Phinehas; the Moslems invariably think of him as Elijah; but the Nosairis follow the Christian custom of associating him with St. George. The worship of El Khudr amongst the ignorant people has almost obscured the Nosairi devotion to Ali who continues to receive due homage, however, from the initiated. The common people make offerings to El Khudr, and they firmly believe the stories of his victory over the dragon and many other reputed exploits of the valiant St. George.

The Metawilis who believe that the twelfth Imam will some day manifest himself to men as the Mahdi and with Jesus will turn mankind to the knowledge of God, relate stories concerning him which are strikingly similar to some which are usually associated with El Khudr and St. George. This Imam is a sort of evergreen saint who has never died, but, disguised

and unknown, he sometimes succours people in distress: e.g. Once a man was attacked by robbers and called on the Imam for aid. There appeared to him a simple muleteer who delivered the traveller from the robbers, conducted him to a safe place, and disappeared from his sight.

A pilgrim on the road to Mecca fell behind the caravan, his camel being sick. In vain he urged the beast along but the caravan disappeared in the distance, leaving the man, who was ignorant of the road, to face the perils of solitary travel. Suddenly there appeared a man on a white horse, who lifted the pilgrim to a place behind him, bore him swiftly towards Mecca, dropped him gently to the earth, and when the man looked up, the horse and its rider had disappeared.

The "MUTUAL HELP" originally implied readiness to take up arms in defence of their friends, to provide for their poor, and never to

refuse hospitality. The factiousness, however, of modern Druzes, has reached a ludicrous stage. Some of the poorest beggars are permitted to make use of honourable titles if they happen to be descendants of certain families. They disdain to intermarry or sometimes even to associate with members of a lower caste who may be much better off than themselves. The rich Druzes take little interest in their poorer relatives, and in many villages one meets with cliques or factions who are not on speaking terms with their rivals who may happen to bear the same name and live at the other end of the village. A visitor would commit a serious offence, if, in calling at a village, he failed to visit the head man of the different factions.

Transmigration of Souls. — Both the Druzes and the Nosairis believe in metempsychosis, and the character of an individual in the present life determines whether the

next incarnation shall be in a higher or lower form. The Druzes believe the soul can only go from one body to another, whence arises their conviction that their number never changes, for the death of one person involves the birth of another.

The Nosairis, however, believe that the soul of a bad man can pass into some lower animal form, such as a cat, a donkey, a wolf, an ant or a louse. All created souls, they say, will eventually become stars in heaven after finally passing through the body of a Nosairi Sheikh, but members of other religions must suffer many reincarnations before they reach their starry goal. Christians at first become swine; Jews become apes; Moslems, donkeys and jackals; flappers may therefore go to butterflies and cricketers will betake themselves to bats.

INITIATION.—The uninitiated amongst the Druzes are not permitted to attend the secret

meetings held on Thursday evenings in the Khulwehs or meeting houses, which are generally situated in lonely isolated places near the villages. These Thursday evening gatherings are not definitely for religious objects, though some of the initiated habitually read portions of Druze writings, but they are largely occupied with the discussion of social and political matters. It is an interesting fact that practically all the educated men belong to the ranks of the uninitiated.

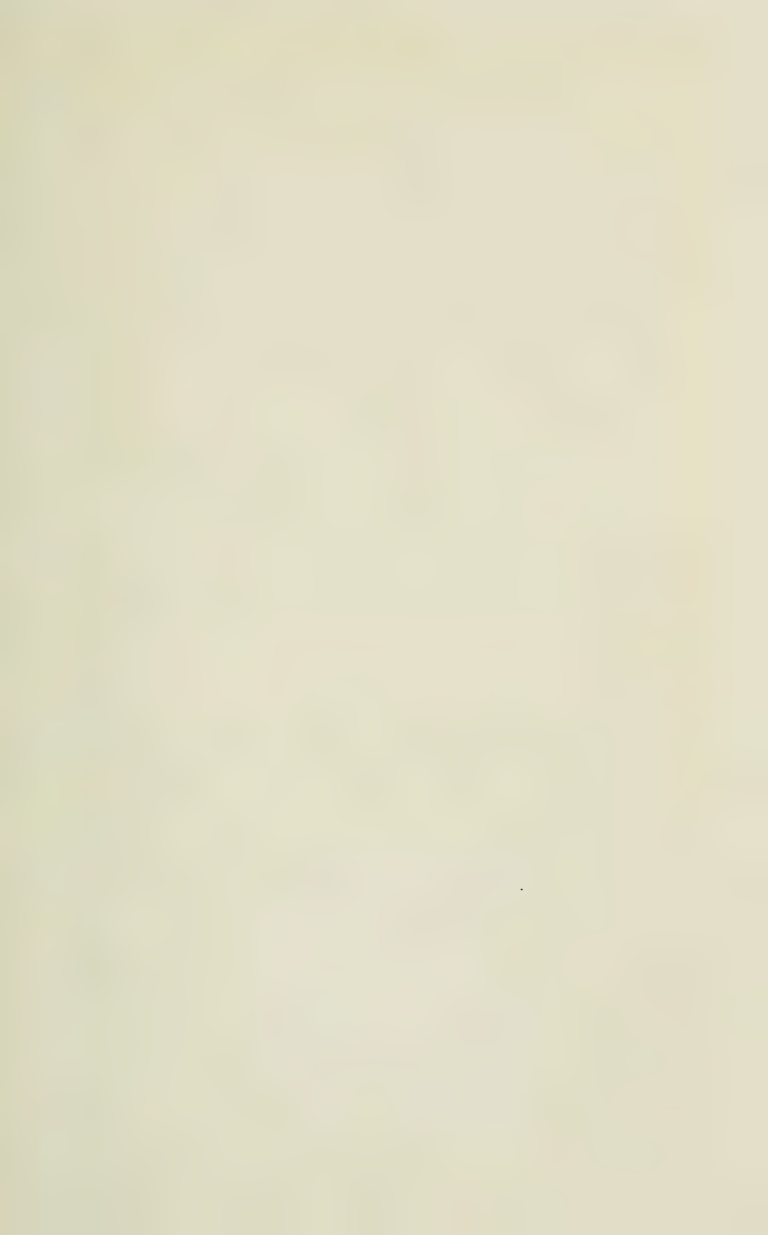
Amongst the Nosairis the vast majority of the males are initiated at the age of 18 when wine is used at the ceremony, and the novice is threatened with the meanest form of reincarnation if he betrays the secrets.

The Druze who seeks initiation must abjure the use of strong drink and tobacco. No instruction or preparation is required for the initiation of a Nosairi, but a Druze is expected to undergo two years' instruction

and probation before he can become initiated.

Feasts.—The Nosairis celebrate Christmas Day as one of their important feasts, and they have a curious ceremony once a year at which a bowl of wine is used; the name Kuddâs which is given to the feast is the same Arabic word which is invariably used for the Christian Mass.

The Trinity.—The Nosairis believe in a Trinity consisting of Ali (the Maaneh or meaning), Mohammed (the Ism or name), and Salman al Farisi (the Bâb or door). The Nosairi says, "I turn towards the door (i.e. Salman), I bow before the name (i.e. Mohammed), I adore the meaning (i.e. Ali)".



Druze Women of the Lebanon baking bread

Group of Druzes in Village near Mount Carmel

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CHAPTER XVIII.

METHODS AND AIMS.



CHAPTER XVIII.

METHODS AND AIMS.

When we commenced our work in the Lebanon we found the great majority of the Druzes were steeped in ignorance. There were some villages where not a single individual could read or write, and it was only natural that the minds of such people should be held in bondage to ridiculous mummery and gross superstition. We determined to bring enlightenment into the hearts and homes of the Druzes, and we were equally determined to make Bible instruction the most important feature of our curriculum, from a firm conviction that purely secular education is profitable neither for this world nor for the next. There is such a thing, however, as the Missionary Focus,

that central point of convergence upon which we attempt to concentrate the different rays of light. We are often called upon to decide whether we shall focus the individual or the crowd, and if we try the crowd we must draw back a little, we must widen our range and lengthen our focus or some of the objects will be left out of our picture. There are times when the missionary can focus his attention upon a single individual and aim at his conversion, but there are times when the outlook is totally different, when he must aim at breaking down prejudices, secure the open door or create an environment in which his converts will be tolerated and allowed to live. It was in our boarding school that we were often able to adjust our focus upon the individual soul, but the work in the villages was a pioneering effort of the most elementary kind, and we focussed our machinery for the specific purpose of taking in the whole of the

village crowd. It seemed to us a mistake to give one per cent of these village lads a thoroughly high-class Western education while the great bulk of their associates were left in the lowest depths of ignorance. A too highly cultured teacher would never go and live in those vermin-stricken villages of the Lebanon he would flee to America and the mass of the people would remain in gross darkness. We noticed that the few converted Druzes were so scattered and isolated that they found it almost impossible to exist amid the evil influences of some fiercely fanatical village. Our plan therefore, was to break down prejudices, not simply in one household or one village but among all the Druzes; to soften their fanaticism, to bring some amount of enlightenment and the influence of Christian ideals to the great bulk of the rising generation with the least possible delay and by every possible means available. If we had waited for highly

trained up-to-date teachers for the simple and laborious work of gathering out the stones, the villagers would never have been reached and our work would have proved more or less of a failure. We therefore formed a training class at our boarding school, so that after a few years' simple training we were able to send back the young men to their villages where they worked like heroes for the enlightenment of their own kith and kin.

All the most successful village schools which showed the best results from the point of view of Christian education were those that came under the care of the youths who passed through our training class at Ain Anub. They were not baptised Christians, they were all still nominally Druzes, but it was evident that the teaching we gave them at the High School had made a very deep impression upon them and had instilled into them a genuine love for the Sacred Scriptures. We have

sometimes been criticised for employing nominal Druzes in our village schools, but our experience proved that the lads who passed under our tuition at Ain Anub did much more for the spread of the Gospel than many of the nominal Christian teachers that we had employed in some of the villages. In one of the villages the young master was remarkably diligent in compelling each of the boys to purchase a Bible, and the amount that these boys learned by heart from the New Testament exceeded by far our most hopeful anticipations. We never asked our village school-teachers to give dogmatic religious instruction, their duty was to see that the appointed portions of the Bible were read intelligently every day and that certain verses were committed to memory by the pupils. This was supplemented by the introduction of a text-book, published in Arabic and sold at our book-store. It was called "Four Thousand Questions and

Answers on the Historical Books of the Bible". Our instructions to the teachers were that the lads should be able in the examination to answer the questions therein contained. This method enabled us to effectively control the religious teaching in all the schools, and when we visited the villages our time was largely occupied in pointing the moral and explaining the importance of the many Scripture passages which the children had learned so thoroughly by heart.

These methods proved remarkably successful, the Druzes were delighted that we employed their own sons as teachers instead of foisting upon them an alien of a rival race, they observed our rules and regulations with the greater loyalty, the parents of the children took a keen interest in their children's Bibles, and the most inaccessible Druze villages were beginning to understand something of the elements of the Christian Faith.

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MEDICAL MISSION TO THE DRUZES,

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CANON J. T. PARFIT,
43 Marmora Road, East Dulwich, S.E. 22.

THE Baakleen Medical Mission to the Druzes was started in 1883 by Miss Wordsworth Smith at the central city of the Druzes in Mt. Lebanon. It is a well-organised Medical Mission with a good General Hospital, a Dispensary, and a large Mission House, all the property of the Mission. The very efficient doctor was himself a converted Druze, and there were generally four or five English ladies associated with him in the various branches of work which are carried on by the Mission.

An Endowment Fund is now being raised for the permanent maintenance of the hospital at Baakleen, which is the only Medical Mission to the Lebanon Druzes. Contributions will be thankfully received by the Hon. Secretary, 43 Marmora Road, East Dulwich, S.E. 22.

THE HOSANNA LEAGUE.

Founder and Chairman of Committee—
CANON S. CAMPBELL,
Canon Residentiary, St. George's, Jerusalem.

THE Hosanna League is a branch of the Jerusalem and the East Mission, founded with the approval and benediction of Bishop Blyth, for the special purpose of developing and extending educational work throughout the Bishopric of "Jerusalem and the East".

The work began at Jerusalem, but its chief activities rapidly extended to the Druze villages of the Lebanon, where grants were made towards the maintenance of a large number of village schools and where scholarships were assigned to a number of deserving boys in the boarding school at Ain Anub.

The work will be resumed, under the guidance of Bishop MacInnes, at the first opportunity, and contributions to its funds will be thankfully received by the Secretary, Miss Walford, 25 Sheffield Terrace, London, W.; or by Canon S. Campbell, "Maydore," Mattock Lane, Ealing.





